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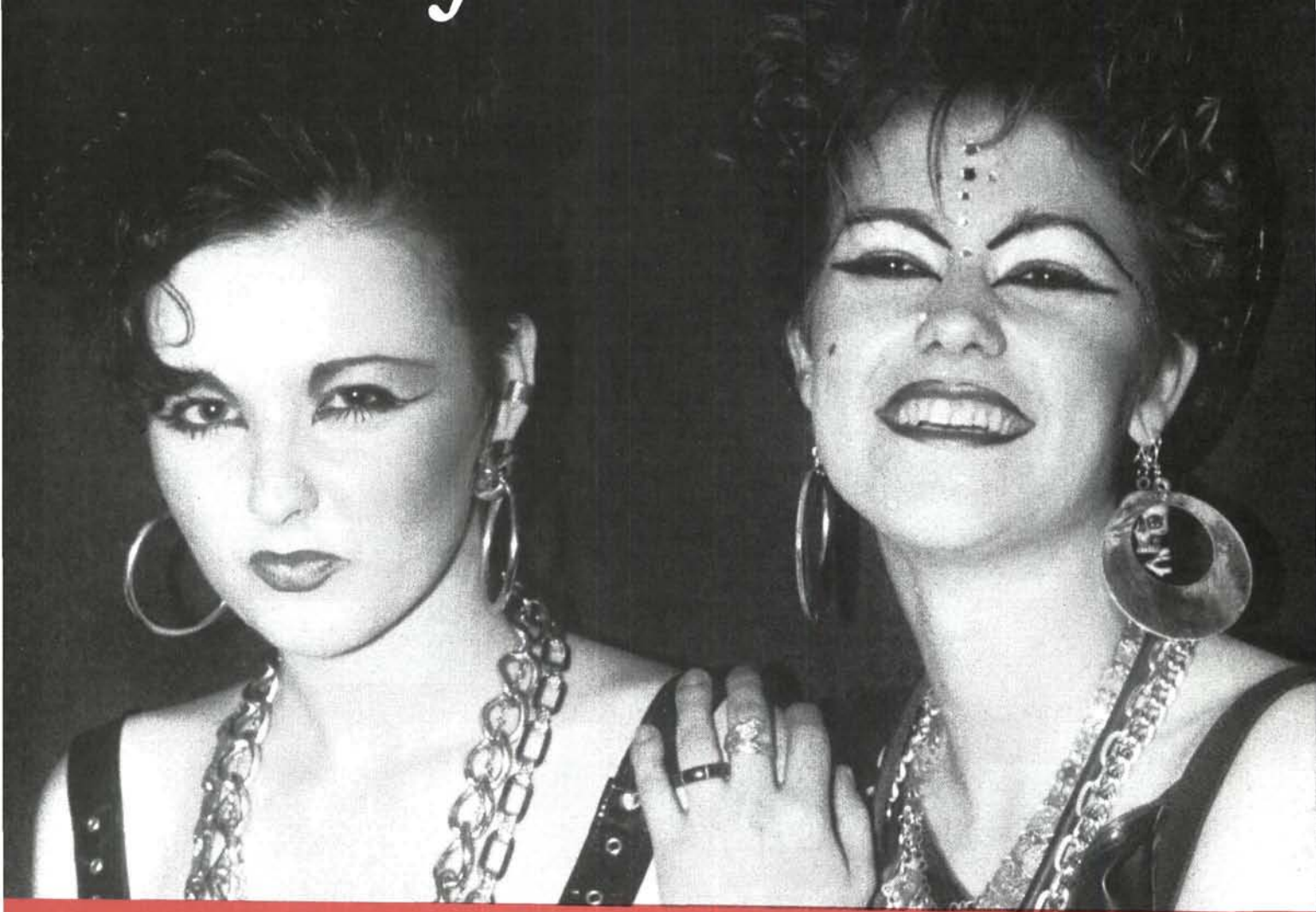
New Statesman

Publishing's 'BIG BANG'

25 July 1986 90p IR£1.34 US$1.50 By Air

ROSALIND DELMAR • LIZ HERON

Who's feminist now?



DUNCAN CAMPBELL: I-spy with my little 20/20 Vision

JULES LUBBOCK: Men dressing up

PETER KELLNER: The Commonwealth strikes back

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Just a few of our greatest successes.

Thanks to modern medicines many "mentally handicapped" people can now live better lives than in the past. For example, epileptic fits (which may accompany brain damage) can be controlled, and people with Down's syndrome can be protected against the further harm that infections once inflicted upon them.

What is more, medicines and vaccines can reduce the incidence of impairment by helping to make childbirth safer and controlling damaging conditions like rubella. And future medical advances may further enhance preventive efforts as well as giving those individuals who happen to be intellectually disabled a still better chance of good health.

But technical interventions alone are often not enough to achieve real success. As a community we must work together to stop prejudice in the field of mental handicap and help everyone achieve a satisfactory life.

Housing; occupation; the chance of marriage; all are examples of key areas.

Photographs: courtesy of MENCAP

It is the task of the pharmaceutical industry to carry out research into the medicines that are still needed. It is up to all of us to see that the public and voluntary caring agencies get the money they require to help people with disabilities to live a fulfilling life.

This advertisement is issued by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry in consultation with MENCAP.

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The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.

MENCAP

Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults

For a copy of the new OHE/MENCAP report, *Mental Handicap – Partnership in the Community?* (price £1.50), write to OHE, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

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New Statesman

Cover photo: Camera Press

All (socialist) feminist now? ROSALIND DELMAR on the 'Women's Liberation Movement', victim of its own success; LIZ HERON on the debate over socialist feminism 20, 29

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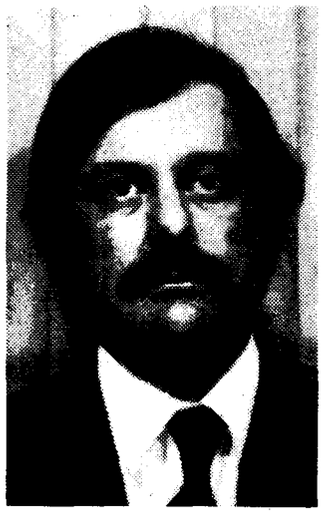
JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY

CHARLES FOX on the Bracknell and Capital jazz festivals; VAL WILMER reviews John Fordham's history of Ronnie Scott's Club.



END OF AN ERA

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE has been the *NS* theatre critic for nearly a generation: his first column appeared in 1968. His last will be next week, as he's leaving to become professor of English and Drama at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Our loss, their gain.

New Statesman

Vol 112 No 2887 25 July 1986

The PM's Royal Wedding Week

ROYAL NUPTIALS and (it is alleged) Royal Displeasure with Downing Street have dominated the week. As we go to press there are no details available about the week's third headline story — the report of the House of Commons defence committee on the Westland affair. It could inflict more immediate damage on the Prime Minister even than the way in which she has chosen to seem to side with President Botha against the obvious instincts of the majority of the multi-racial Commonwealth — and in particularly against the instincts of its titular head.

It should seem absurd that the Westland story, which concerned a relatively insignificant helicopter company with a distinguished past and small plants in the West Country and the Isle of Wight, continues to have major political repercussions of this sort. It does so only because the whole tale reveals the character of the Thatcher approach to government.

It probably made very little long term difference to anyone which side won in the Westland battle. But what does matter is that it displayed for convention or propriety, contempt for the House of Commons, willingness to use the civil service for squalid political infighting within her administration and to require the Secretary to the Cabinet to cover up and lie on her behalf.

In some ways the Prime Minister's refusal to take no for an answer from the civil service is an admirable trait — and one that should be studied with admiration by any incoming Labour government. But the flip side of that coin, a refusal to observe *any* rules of the game governing such things as the relationship between ministers and civil servants marks a lowering of standards without recent parallel.

Since Mrs Thatcher has simply refused to consider herself bound by constitutional 'convention' in these matters, it is not surprising that others are beginning to behave in the same way towards her. The story 'the Queen is not amused' about South Africa and the Commonwealth was clearly an 'unconventional' ambush. But so was another, almost unpublicised event last week, which arose directly out of a sense of outrage at Mrs Thatcher's behaviour in the Westland affair.

The Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, Sir Peter Middleton, took the unprecedented step of allowing it to be known that he had instructed the mandarins under him that they must refuse to accept instructions from politicians that compromise their professional neutrality and constitutional integrity.

Middleton is not some anti-Thatcher fifth columnist lurking in the Whitehall undergrowth. After close personal service in the Treasury for such widely differing Chancellors as Anthony Barber and Denish Healey he was hand picked by Mrs Thatcher and made head of the Treasury at a young age, promoted over the heads of several others, precisely because she rated him as 'one of us'. He renounced his Keynsian past and worked faithfully on all the monetarist rubbish that was churned out to such damaging effect by Chancellors How and Lawson. But Westland stuck in his gullet.

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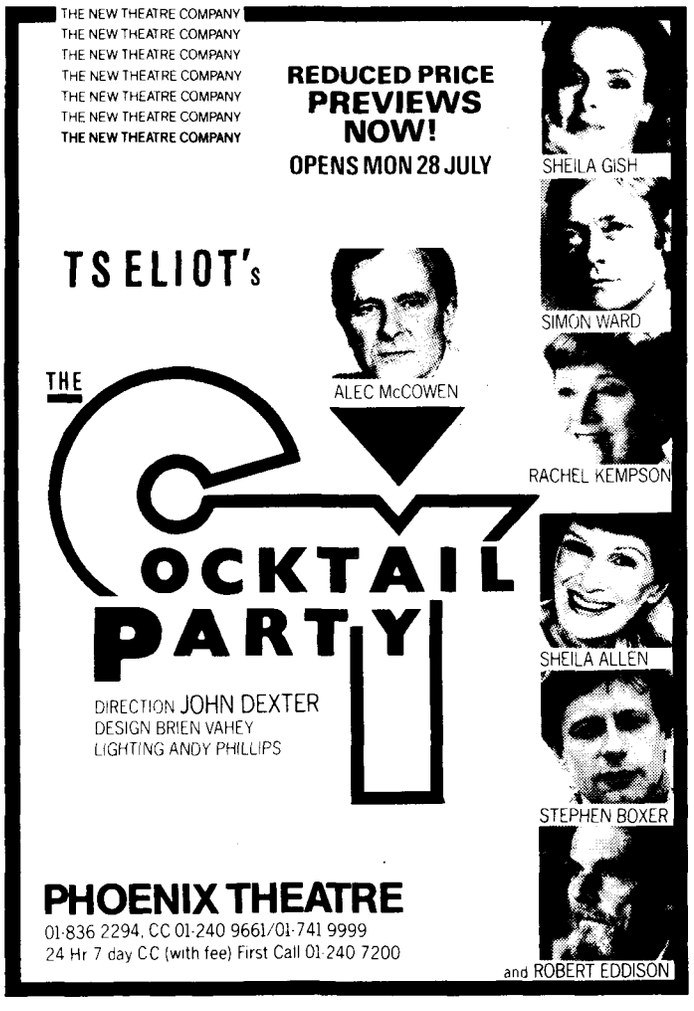
It did so because the civil service machinery was being used by the political dirty tricks department. Mrs Thatcher may carefully not have known the detail of what was about to be done. But she said, in effect, 'who will rid me of this troublesome Heseltine?' After the leak she tried, even, for a time to justify it. The information, she said, had to be got 'into the public domain' as quickly as possible. Her faithful Cabinet Secretary covered up for her. The same Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, as — again in breach of every civil service precedent — she has asked to stay on after retirement age. That is another convention that is never broken — or at least never was until she came along. But Sir Robert knows where the Thatcher skeletons are buried. So she is not letting him go while she is still alive. □

We name the guilty party — when we can

THERE SEEMED to be pretty general agreement across a wide spectrum of the Tory Party this week that hanging would be too good for the scoundrel who leaked to the *Sunday Times* the astonishing news that the Queen cares about what is being done to the Commonwealth by Mrs Thatcher, while Mrs Thatcher does not. 'Someone must go' thundered Beaumont-Dark. 'Impeach, impeach' cried Fairburn.

In an earlier, more robust age the answer would have been simple. The editor of the *Sunday Times* would simply have had his thumbs inserted into thumbscrews and been invited to reveal his sources. It would have all been over by Wedding Day. There would have been none of this modern stuff about journalists refusing to reveal etc. etc.



(Even so Andrew Neil chose to finger his source as being 'someone at the Palace' which is unnecessarily precise information to include in a refusal to reveal your sources, unless you are trying to lay a false trail).

It also leaves unanswered the interesting question of why Rupert Murdoch wanted one of his leading organs to provoke a synthetic row between the monarch and her Tory Prime Minister — and in Royal Wedding Week at that. For Mr Neil will not have allowed himself to get out on an anti-Thatcher — constitutional-crisis-involving-the-Palace limb without clearing his lines with higher authority.

Anyway, since the use of thumbscrews appears for the time being to be contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights and, therefore, out, the full investigative resources of the *New Statesman* have instead been put to work to bring you the truth. What follows is a report on progress to date.

In the normal course of events the presumption about a political scoop of this sort in the *Sunday Times* would be that the source was the Secretary of State for Energy. Peter Walker employed Andrew Neil as a research assistant in the early 1970s and they have remained close ever since. A number of insider stories in the *Sunday Times* since Neil became editor in 1983 have seemed to carry internal evidence tracing them back to Walker (remember the miners' strike?). But the idea is preposterous. Peter Walker, as a Privy Councillor, would never pass himself off as someone who could speak for the Queen's mind. And, in any case, we have Neil's word for it that the world came from the Palace itself. The *NS* hounds were pulled off this line of enquiry from the start.

So presently the pack is following a much more promising lead, for which there is, sadly however, as yet not a shred of evidence. Our prime suspect is *the Duke of Edinburgh*.

Consider the facts. He can certainly claim both to be someone in the Palace and to know the Queen's mind. There is even a clear motive. Mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against South Africa, which Thatcher opposes, with the UK taking a positive and leading role might not bring down the Botha regime at once, but it would surely involve a massive role for the Royal Navy. Patrolling all those thousands of miles of coast line would make the Beira patrols during Rhodesian sanctions look very small potatoes.

Now Prince Philip is, of course, an ex-Navy man himself, which would incline him to have a soft spot for the senior service. But the real point is Prince Andrew, Duke of York, Lieutenant RN. When all the wedding fuss and the honeymoon are over, what's the lad going to do? Thatcher talks big about defence, but under her the Navy seems to be contracting all the time.

Our secondary suspect is *Prince Charles*. The line of reasoning here has a charming simplicity, even if it suffers once again from lack of that trivial thing, evidence. We had the word of one of Charles' architectural advisers not long ago that he seriously wonders whether he'll ever come to the throne the way the social fabric's rotting, splitting and generally suffering from rising damp and drying rot in the inner cities. If he sees his island throne tottering, and is now (he *does* see Cabinet papers) facing the spectre of losing his 17 overseas Crowns assembled under the Commonwealth, then there really must seem not much point in continuing the endless preparation for the Assumption of his Duties.

'Occam's Razor', that sane medieval prescription always to choose the simplest explanation that will cover the facts, inclines our worldwide network of investigators to suggest that *Prince Philip*, *Prince Charles*, and *Prince Andrew* went as one body to see Andrew Neil. Accordingly we are placing advertisements in all newspapers inviting anyone who saw a state landau with outriders and SAS sharpshooters in the environs of Wapping last Friday or Saturday to communicate at once with these offices.

Well, that's about as far as we've got so far with our leak inquiry. But we shall keep you posted if we get any further. In fact, to take a leaf out of Andrew Neil's book, we threaten 'further disclosures' as soon as our crack investigative team stumble across anything. □

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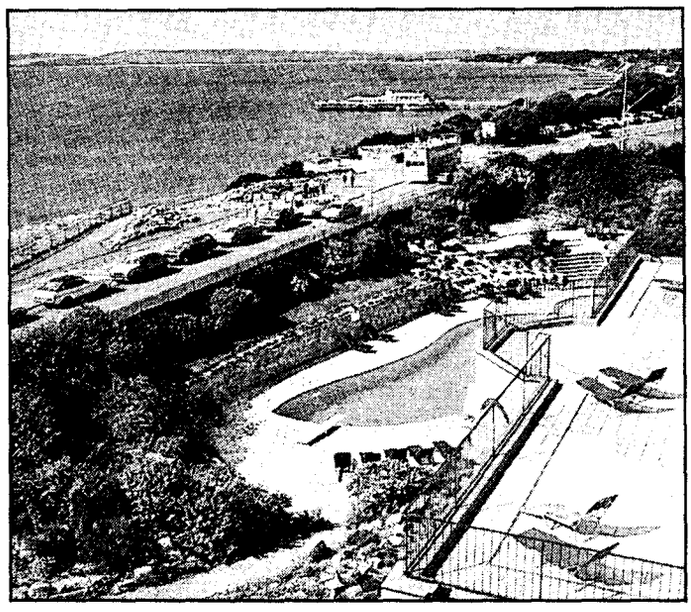
SUN, SAND AND A NEW TIMESHARE WHEEZE



But somewhere beyond space and time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime.
— Rupert Brooke, Heaven.

If you thought the timeshare business was a bit dodgy, you might think it a good idea that a top legal expert in the field has set up a professional body to 'protect the interests of customers'. Not so. IAN WILLIAMS and JOHN RENTOUL investigate

WHEN SOLICTOR James Edmonds set up the European Holiday Timeshare Association in November last year it was the second time he'd been involved in a trade association to set standards for the industry.

For six weeks in September-October last year, he was secretary of the British Property Timeshare Association (BPTA). He left on 30 October, declaring it a 'thankless task'.

Edmonds is best known for his book, *International Timesharing,* published in 1984, on the legal complexities of buying the right to use holiday homes for specified weeks each year. In it he says that the 'regulation of the industry in the UK is in the hands of the BPTA'. At the time he was a legal adviser to the BPTA. But in this year' edition of the book Edmonds has done a David Owen — regorously deleting all references to the BPTA as Owen expunged socialism from his works.

In its place, the definitive organisation is the European Holiday Timeshare Association (EHTA), of which Edmonds became a director a week after he left the BPTA. The EHTA, according to Edmonds' second edition, 'represents the timeshare industry in the UK and throughout Europe'.

The wider horizons of the new organisation were matched by rather wider powers than Edmonds ever had at the BPTA. In December 1985 the Articles of Association of the EHTA were changed to give its founder members, Edmonds and Simon Bowen, his partner in the law firm Edmonds Bowen and Co, powers which would have had Papa Doc gasping with envy.

Not only were the two founders to nominate all members of the council of the EHTA, but they retained the right to veto any of their decisions until 10 September 1988. The rules can be changed by the council on recommendation of the Executive Vice Presidents — subject to the founders' veto of course — and, even more extraordinary, can operate retrospectively!

Edmonds says he and Bowen have 'undertaken that when the membership reaches 30, they will resign and surrender all powers'. There are currently 21 property developers or timeshare companies which are members, paying £600 to join and £1,200 a year membership.

Virgin Isles register

Until the 'surrender' these powers should enable Edmons to avoid a re-run of the unpleasantness at the BPTA, which arose after he fell out with a client who was a BPTA member — now the subject of legal action in the Isle of Man. Acting as lawyer for a timeshare developer, Edmonds drew up contracts for a holiday development in the Mediterranean in April 1985. The contracts involved a company called Timeshare Trustees International holding the title deeds for the property in trust for a fee, and holding downpayments from purchasers of timeshares.

This is the usual way of dealing with the problem of who actually owns property divided up by time, and Edmonds properly declared his interest as a director of Timeshare Trustees International, although the original draft contracts nominated another company in which he wasn't interested.

Timeshare Trustees International operates from the Isle of Man, but is registered in the British Virgin Islands. It charges £50 per timeshare for its rather passive services: on an 80-apartment development that's £200,000 if each is sold for 50 weeks, involving 2,000 separate owners.

Edmonds explains that Timeshare Trustees International acts as trustee for schemes all over Europe. 'It was felt not impossible, on a change of government, that exchange control might be reimposed. The Isle of Man is within the scheduled territories [to which exchange controls applied], but the British Virgin Islands are outside the scheduled territories. Obviously European developers selling to other Europeans would not want to be affected by British exchange control regulations.'

There's a great deal of acrimony in the industry, but one of Edmonds' more measured critics says: 'The trouble with James is he doesn't know whether he wants to be a lawyer or a businessman.' The timeshare market is worth £30 million a year, but it's still an intimate business and all the participants seem to know each other. But it's family quarrels which cause most blood-letting. ●

BREAKAWAY UNION

Prison governors plan to escape from the SCPS

THE 530-STRONG Prison Governors branch of the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) look set to form a breakaway union. The new non-political union is to be called the Prison Governors Alliance.

The *New Statesman* has obtained a copy of the confidential discussion document which sets out the branch's reasons for wanting to quit the SCPS.

This details a long dispute between the governors and the SCPS Home Office Group over the Prison Management Structure Review. It states: 'It is a fact that the Governor's branch could not agree with the coordinated SCPS Home Office Group input to that Review Team . . . This deterioration became even more pronounced during 1985—86 and culminated in the BEC (branch executive committee) suspending any contact . . .' This dispute followed a decision by prison governors to consider 'alternate representation' if the SCPS merged with the CPSA, as seemed possible last year.

Sally Denny, chair of the Home Office Group of the SCPS and National Executive member, says: 'The prison governors' branch do not seem prepared to discuss the issue of representation with us and the officers are obviously seeking to lead their members out of the union.'

A special prison governors conference on 23 July at which the breakaway union would have been discussed was cancelled by the SCPS when they discovered that draft ballot papers had been printed with a discussion paper setting out the possibility of leaving the union. This had been circulated to governors with a draft constitution which stated: 'The alliance shall not engage in any form of party political affiliation.'

In a letter dated 4 July explaining his reasons for cancelling the meeting, the general secretary of the SCPS, Lesley Christie, said: 'I am surprised and disappointed that your branch decided to circulate to members a discussion document without first discussing the issue with the General Secretary. Especially a discussion document presumably produced in society time and with society money that indicates a breakaway organisation as being feasible . . .'

This Thursday the National Executive Committee of the SCPS will be meeting to consider what action to take. Sid Powell, Secretary of the Prison Governors Branch, says: 'The matter of future representation of prison governors is under active discussion. We would not take such a step lightly. We are still having discussions with the SCPS, and are considering ballotting our members.'

Arlen Harris

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TEASING OUT THE SIGNIFICANCE

Deportation orders *should* regard community status

A LORDS decision of 27 June about the considerations that the immigration authorities *must* take into account when challenged over a deportation order enshrines the fascinating concept of an individual's importance to his/her 'community'. MAURICE SUNKIN unravels the significance

THE EFFECTS of deportation orders can extend beyond the individual and immediate family involved. When active and respected members of communities are threatened with deportation the community itself may suffer.

In *R v Immigration Appeal Tribunal ex parte Bakhtaur Singh* (*The Times* 27 June 1986) the House of Lords held that immigration authorities must weigh the loss to a community when deciding whether to deport. This important decision considerably broadens the factors that must be taken into account when deporting and may provide additional grounds upon which to challenge deportations in the courts.

Bakhtaur Singh overstayed his leave to enter the country and became liable to deportation under the Immigration Act 1971. He is a well known musician, teacher and priest and has become a valued member of the Sikh community.

When ultimately a deportation order was made against him he appealed to an adjudicator producing evidence that his deportation would be a profound loss to the Sikh community. The adjudicator, deciding that he could only consider compassionate matters of a personal nature, felt bound by an earlier case in which the effect of a deportation order on community relations was held to be political and therefore a matter for the Home Secretary alone. (*R v Immigration Appeal Tribunal Ex parte Sohal* [1981] Imm. A.R. 20).

The Immigration Appeal Tribunal refused to allow Singh to appeal against this decision and Singh applied for judicial review of this refusal. In the High Court he was successful but the Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. He was forced to take his case to the House of Lords which ultimately decided in his favour.

'Third party' role

Lord Bridge emphasised that the immigration rules required the immigration authorities to consider the adverse affects on third parties of a deportation.

As examples he gave a business partner whose deportation could ruin the partnership, an irreplaceable worker whose deportation could impair a company's business, the deportation of a social worker whose absence would adversely affect the local community, and the indispensable member of a scientific team whose deportation would deprive the public of the benefit of the research.

These affects, he held, are factors that must be taken into account not only by the minister, but also by the adjudicator and the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. Failure to consider them contravenes both the immigration rules and the general principle that those who exercise statutory discretion must take all relevant factors into account — the so called *Wednesbury* principles.

Lord Bridge wasn't impressed by the authority's argument that this will enable communities or groups to organise industrial action as part of a campaign against somebody's deportation. Such threats could, he said, only exert improper pressure on a Secretary of State and would not have to be considered as relevant to deportation.

But he refused to be drawn on the precise demarcation between relevant and irrelevant factors, preferring to leave this to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Since the Immigration Appeal Tribunal was wrong to refuse permission to appeal it must now reconsider Singh's case in the light of his important role in the community.

Welcome ruling

Singh will be welcomed with enthusiasm and relief by ethnic minority communities and those concerned with the welfare of immigrants. It is one of those sporadic reminders that our courts can hand down enlightened decisions on immigration law. In this respect it contrasts with *Swati & Butt* (noted *NS* 14 February) and illustrates that judicial review can be very useful for challenging governmental decisions.

Clearly, it would be misplaced optimism to see *Singh* as heralding a new age of judicial enlightenment. But it does contain several potentially far reaching features. The most important being the judiciary's recognition that in considering whether or not to deport, a community's interest may be separated from the general public interest, and presumably may prevail against it.

There is here something of an echo of Lord Scarman's demand in his report on the Brixton riots, that the establishment must recognise the special needs and aspirations of ethnic minority communities. In this respect the decision may suggest that some of those high in the judicial hierarchy are aware that unsympathetic and insensitive immigration control aggravates already fragile race relations.

This message must not be lost on the immigration service. ●

Maurice Sunkin is a barrister and senior lecturer at the South Bank Polytechnic.

THIRD WORLD

More cash crop exports, urges World Bank

THE WORLD BANK, whose new chair, Barber Conable, 63, is a former US Republican senator, recommends developing countries export *more* cash crops, not less. The Bank's just-published *World Development Report 1986* says free trade in agriculture will help the Third World.

'If you did have free trade in agriculture the share of trade would shift in favour of developing countries', according to Andarup Ray, team-leader of the Bank staff who prepared this year's 256 page report: 'the poor will be much better off because most of them live in rural areas'.

As the aid-lending sibling of the International Monetary Fund the World Bank argues that farmers in developing countries are discriminated against twice over: heavily taxed by their own governments, and then told they can't sell their produce in industrial markets including Britain.

If industrial countries cut their agricultural tariffs by half, Third World exporters would gain $5.9 billion (£3.9 billion) in extra sales of sugar, tobacco, meat, oilseeds and other cash crops, the Bank calculates. But at present the European Community, the United States and Japan protect their farmers and keep out cheap imports.

'Most of the world's food exports are grown in industrial countries, where the costs of food production are high, and consumed in developing countries, where the costs are lower', argues the report. Subsidised wheat and sugar, complains the Bank, are being dumped in the Third World underpricing local farmers.

In another study earlier this year the World Bank estimated that 730 million people in the Third World don't get enough to eat, whether or not there's famime in Africa. But the Bank insists: 'progress in the battle against malnutrition and poverty can be sustained if, and only if, there is satisfactory economic growth'.

War on Want isn't convinced: 'If anything, free trade has made things worse for poor people in the Third World', Alison Whyte, a spokesperson for the charity, told the *New Statesman*. 'Free trade assumes trade between equal partners but the terms are fixed by the powerful "developed" countries and the underdeveloped countries are the losers'.

John Tanner

Bob Gannon/Frame

Up the road and under the Arch and along the front drive and through the forecourt *someone* was allegedly telling the *Sunday Times* that the Queen is restless under Mrs Thatcher's obduracy. In Trafalgar Square (Friday) Blacks and whites were marking Nelson Mandela's birthday with flowers, placards, and another sort of obduracy.

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'ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A STUBBORN THATCHER'

. . . AND story-tellers gathered in Edinburgh to write an ending for her. ADAM LIVESY was at a Commonwealth Writers' Conference full of political anger and exasperation at Mrs Thatcher's opposition to sanctions

FIFTY writers were there. Six were not. Chinua Achebe said the day before last weekend's conference that in view of Nigeria's boycott of the Games he wouldn't be coming.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya had earlier made it known that he too would be staying away. There followed withdrawals by two more Black African writers, Musaemura Zimunya of Zimbabwe and Mongane Serote of South Africa, and by Mulk Raj Anand and Balraj Khanna of India.

The pen as principled as the sinew. Chinua Achebe (l) wouldn't break ranks with Nigeria's athletes — so stayed away. And so (r) did Ngugi wa Thiong'o, of Kenya.

At the opening session, two of the African writers who did attend, Ben Okri and Adewale Maja Pearce, presented a statement, later signed by all the delegates, saying they understood the absent writers' motives and expressing their opposition to Thatcher's position on South Africa.

If Britain was isolated politically, then what emerged in cultural terms from the readings and discussions was the independence of Commonwealth writers from the influence of 'standard English' and 'English literature'.

Gaelic meets Creole

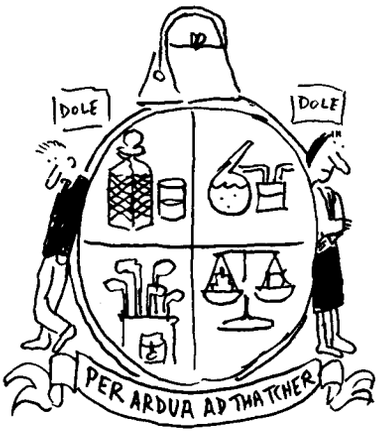
One moment captured the positive spirit. On the last evening, John Agard of Guyana got the whole conference singing 'Loch Lomond', while he extemporised a dub poem in harmony. It was a beautiful antidote to the narrow national self-interest we hear from Whitehall.

Through the imaginative programming of the convenor, Angus Calder, there were other striking juxtapositions that emphasised the ties other than the English one that bind the Commonwealth, like a joint reading by Sorley MacLean, who writes mainly in Gaelic, and the fine Canadian writer Alastair MacLeod.

On Sunday morning the conference hammered out a motion that combined this sense of cultural independence with a response to the current political crisis in the Commonwealth. Passed with only a single abstention, it expressed profound regret at the British government's refusal to improve sanctions on South Africa despite the views of all other Commonwealth nations. 'If', it went on, 'Prime Minister Thatcher cannot immediately signal her government's willingness to join with the Commonwealth in imposing sanctions on South Africa the participants at this conference request that her government do the logical and decent thing by voluntarily withdrawing Great Britain from the Commonwealth.'

A celebration of African literature, at which Achebe and Ngugi *will* speak, is to take place at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London this weekend, and a delegation of writers plan to march from the ICA to Downing Street to present the conference's resolution to Mrs Thatcher. ●

MISCELLANY



So harrowing has been the private spectacle of the PM's anguish over the 'uncaring' policies of The Queen that one of Mrs Thatcher's 'closest advisers' has breached all precedent and given us the following transcript of a conversation between Mrs T and her press agent Bernard Ingham. It occurred at 2 am this Wednesday morning in Downing Street.

Mrs T: That's the third time She's made me stand during the Audience: when I took St Paul's for my *Te Thatcherum* after the Falklands triumph, when Ronnie invaded Grenada, and now this evening.
Ingham: Your poor feet.
Mrs T: Am I or an I not an International Stateswoman? And is She or is She not a tinpot minor royal from some German state that sounds like a Riesling?
Ingham: You are. She is.
Mrs T: Give me some more Scotch.
Ingham: . . *glug . . glug*
Mrs T: She's got to go.
Ingham (*confused*): Where?
Mrs T: Go! Go, go!
Ingham: Go? You mean — like, *go*?
Mrs T (*rising to her poor feet*): Bernard, you are to write down what I am about to say. You are to leak it from Geoffrey Howe's office to — let me see . . . yes, the *New Statesman* — and later you'll refuse to give evidence before the Committee of Enquiry as usual.
Ingham: You got it PM!
Mrs T (*voice soaring above the Saatchi & Saatchi Decibel Line*): Have there not been women Queens before? Greta Garbo of Sweden —
Ingham: Christina, ma'am. Garbo only played her in the movie.
Mrs T: Bette Davis of England —
Ingham: Elizabeth I, ma'am. Davis was the actress.
Mrs T: Queen Anne, Queen Victoria. Two a penny! But Bernard, who (*silkily*) am I?
Ingham: You, PM, I mean ma'am?
Mrs T: Yes, I! Am I not the first ever woman Prime Minister of Great and ever greater Britain? Am I not the harbinger of the new age, the very thrush of innovation?
Ingham: Thrush, ma'am?
Mrs T (*sweeping on*): She shall have my Dulwich house.
Ingham: What?
Mrs T: That women in Buckingham Palace.
Ingham: You mean . . .
Mrs T: Yes!
Ingham (*awed*): The Dulwich house . . . brilliant . . . but won't Denis . . .?
Mrs T: Wake him. Tell him he can have clock-golf on the Palace lawn except when I give a Garden Party. And then wake Lord Hailsham.
Ingham: But he's just got married. And it's 3 am.
Mrs T: Business before having sex. Tell him to bring me round a — what's it called?
Ingham (*gobbling with excitement*): A what? A what?
Mrs T: A Bill of Attainder. Of Impeachment. Whatever we used against the GLC, *use it against that woman*!
Ingham: And what shall it say?
Mrs T (*climbing on the kitchen cabinet table and waving the scroll of her honorary degree from the Lyndon LaRouche University of Californian Right-wing Fruitcases as if it were a field-marshal's baton*): Thou Elizabeth Capet, I mean Windsor, in so far as you stand revealed as a loony Lefty and Socialist, we Margaret Hilda Thatcher in virtue of the powers entrusted to us by the Landslide of '83 and to complete our Revolution promised in '79 do hereby remove you as head of the Commonwealth, do dissolve the Commonwealth, and do install ourself in Buck House.
Ingham: She'll never sign it.
Mrs T: Yes she will. If she doesn't sign any paper I put before her she's got to abdicate. Got her coming and going.
Ingham: Tee-hee-hee.
Mrs T: Oh, and Bernard —
Ingham: Yes your Imperial majesty?
Mrs T: What's that Reagan woman getting for her memoirs?
Ingham: $5 million, they say, your Eminence.
Mrs T: Denis is to have $10 million.
Ingham: At once your Holiness. Oxford University Press perhaps?
Mrs T: Dolt. Blitherer. For that you can be my Prime Minister.
Ingham (*stands*): Oh God!

Reptile

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SCRUTINY

FAIR MAKES ONE GASP

THE sycophantic chorus of disapproval in Mrs Thatcher's free press over MPs voting themselves a 'pay rise' was an attempt to smear the Opposition with lining its own pockets — but what she was really angry about was the idea of providing more resources for the legislature (them) against the executive (her), reports JOHN RENTOUL

BACKBENCHERS caught the government out in a thinly-disguised 'ambush' in the Commons at 1.30 in the morning on Thursday last week, and voted to increase their allowances for a secretary and research by 52 per cent from £13,211 to £20,140 a year.

Instead of reversing the decision (only 34 Tories voted for the increase, and although many others abstained they could have been whipped into line) Mrs Thatcher scolded the miscreants roundly, got her press secretary Bernard Ingham to brief 'the lobby' and hoped the issue would go away during the present recess.

Because of the strength of feeling on the backbenches the Prime Minister's manager, John Biffen, had probably advised against provoking a full-scale confrontation with Tory MPs. So the government conceded defeat, but distanced itself from the increase by deploring it in colourful non-attributable language, repeated almost word for word throughout the press.

> 'Premier furious as MPs vote for more expenses' (*Today*). 'Anger over 52pc pay rise vote by MPs' (*Daily Telegraph*). 'Vote that was a slap in the face for us all' (*Express* Opinion). 'The gravy train' (*Daily Telegraph* leader column). The *Sun* said: 'Porkers unite'. *Mirror* Comment: 'Cashing in by the few.'

The subtext of all this is that MPs can't function effectively because they lack offices, let alone secretaries, which is just how the government likes it to be. It is miffed because the back benches — almost unanimous on this point regardless of party — have finally had enough. Mrs Thatcher peevishly told the Commons that the cost of Parliament has gone up from £26 million in 1979 to £72 million last year.

This is a 65 per cent increase, even if inflation is taken into account. But the cost of 10 Downing Street has gone up by 84 per cent in real terms since 1979/80. It now costs over £4 million, or the equivalent of 314 MPs' old secretarial/research allowances. Even after the increase, Downing Street alone has more resources at its disposal than the entire Parliamentary Labour Party.

(In addition, Downing Street spends about £0.5 million on foreign visits, a similar amount on 'accommodation' and £31,448 on entertainment: *Hansard*, 9 April 1986, cols 122-3.)

And ministers are all entitled to offices in the Palace of Westminster *as well as* their Whitehall corporate headquarters, and to whole retinues of private office staff paid for under the heading of 'civil service' rather than 'House of Commons'.

By international standards the resources available to MPs are poor. French deputies — to take just one example — get over £40,000 a year on top of their salaries for two assistants and 'secretariat', and can call on parliamentary shorthand writers. They also have a new purpose-built office block.

The building opposite the Palace of Westminster, No 1 Parliament Street, is being refurbished but won't provide its 60 new MPs' offices until 1990 at the earliest. It won't be before 2000 that every MP who wants one will be able to have an office. The New Building subcommittee of the Services Committee hasn't yet even decided what to do with Palace Chambers, the building above Westminster tube station which is being demolished.

MPs' researchers and secretaries work in conditions of Victorian overcrowding, where they have an office at all.

It ought to be a minimum principle that an MP should have an office of her or his own, a secretary and some kind of research help. In another Ingham plant, several papers reported that 'there is growing pressure for some formal procedure of scrutiny whereby MPs should justify their expenditure' (*Telegraph*). Labour MP Chris Smith, who moved the amendment to increase the allowance, says he'd warmly welcome such a move. ●

Montage: Leon Kuhn

Last week's vote to improve pay for secretaries and researchers struck back against the heavy hand of the government machine.

Customs v gay books

A practice run under the (?) 'new rules'

NEARLY A MONTH has passed since Customs & Excise threw out its own conspiracy case against Gay's the Word bookshop (*NS* 4 July). Treasury Minister Peter Brooke's decision to scrap the intended Old Bailey trail — it's assumed that his was the political *nous* — looks cleverer with every passing minute.

The *Daily Telegraph* (for example), which extensively covered the committal proceedings of June-July 1985, didn't say a word about the 27 June collapse and withdrawal of the government case. Some 1.3 million Tory supporters were accordngly spared loss of faith in Customs' training and management-control at a time when it is arming officers (announced last week) to combat hard drugs.

The sole merit of going through to the full gruelling experience of a weeks-long Old Bailey trial this October, from a lofty cultural and civil liberties point of view — it would have been merciless on the nine defendants — would have been to keep a spotlight beating on Customs till it definitively cleaned up its act on imported books and magazines; and till Parliament cleaned up the muddle in the law (one law for imported literature, another for home-produced).

As it is, everything is plunged back into near-Stygian obscurity. £500,000 or so, we estimate, has been spent all round (*NS* 4 July) and the bookshop still has no clear parameters on what Customs officers may elect to view as 'prohibited' over coming months or years.

A test, potentially a series of tests, is therefore to be undertaken in a trailblazing operation on behalf of *all* would-be importers of the literature.

Six of 19 titles which Customs required on 27 June to be sent back to America have been freshly ordered through Amsterdam by the Defend Gay's the Word Campaign, for sale in the shop: *Men in Erotic Art, Men Loving Men*, and *Men Loving Themselves*, and three novels by 'Phil Andros'.

The books are expected to arrive by the end of July and Customs will be formally notified of the fact.

It will then be open to Customs to remain quiet, or to issue 'seizure' notices, which would bring the Campaign and Customs face to face in a magistrate's court. No legal aid would be granted. One such case could cost the Campaign £3,000. There's some £20,000 left in the kitty out of £53,000 raised over 2½ years for this antediluvian run-in with frontier censorship.

Andrew Lumsden

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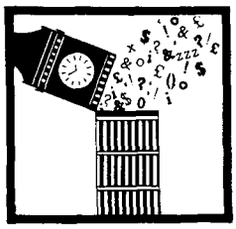

'Palace': the soap opera where Thatcher plays JR

IT IS ONE of the age-old debates in journalism. Which deserves the credit — the newspaper that first breaks a story, or the one that comes along later with much the same information and serves it up in a way that makes waves?

Twenty-one years ago the *Guardian* tacked on to the end of a back-page news item the fact that John Freeman, then editor of the *New Statesman*, was likely to become Britain's High Commissioner in New Delhi. Hardly anyone noticed — except a *Daily Mail* reporter who wrote the next day's front-page lead on Harold Wilson's decision to pick a political ally rather than a career diplomat. The *Daily Mail* claimed (and received) the credit for stirring up the fuss that followed, while the *Guardian* squeaked away, crying 'we wuz robbed'.

Last weekend's *Sunday Times* story about the Queen and Mrs Thatcher belongs to the unoriginal-but-well-packaged school of journalistic enterprise. The notion that the two women do not get on has been around for some years. In 1982 Anthony Sampson wrote in *The Changing Anatomy of Britain:*

> The weekly meetings between the Queen and Mrs Thatcher — both of the same age — are dreaded by at least one of them. The relationship is the more difficult because their roles seem confused: the Queen's style is more matter-of-fact and domestic; while it is Mrs Thatcher (who is taller) who bears herself like a queen.

Later that year there was no secret that the Queen wanted the Falklands victory parade in London to emphasise reconciliation rather than triumph, while Mrs Thatcher sought the opposite effect.

The in June 1984, came a flurry of stories about the Queen and the miners' strike. Under the headline: 'Royal concern grows', the *Daily Telegraph* reported:

> The Queen has been shocked by the clashes between the miners and the police. She has been particularly upset by television news coverage of the violent scenes.

The tabloid papers then turned up the volume on this Queen-versus-Premier tale and converted it into an outright attack on Mrs Thatcher, who then became upset at what the Palace was apparently saying. According to the *Sun*:

> An irritated Mrs Thatcher has rejected point blank the Queen's implied criticism of her handling of the pit war. The Prime Minister is far from happy that Her Majesty has let her 'alarm' become known publicly.

That story emanated from Downing Street. Whatever the detailed truth about the Queen had actually said to Mrs Thatcher, the reaction of Mrs Thatcher was certainly angry. She *believed* the Queen was against her: in terms of Thatcherite demonology, the monarch was not 'one of us'.

That same feeling provoked Lord Whitelaw's indiscretion last week, leading the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* to report fears among 'senior ministers' that the differences between the Palace and Downing Street over sanctions against South Africa could provoke a constitutional clash at next month's Commonwealth summit.

Put all those events together, add in the obvious point that the Queen is by nature and upbringing in favour of national and international conciliation, while Mrs Thatcher is not, and the conclusion is clear: the Queen does not like her Prime Minister's political style. If you think about it, the really remarkable story would be one that says:

PETER KELLNER

'The Queen has turned her back on 34 years of working for harmony at home and abroad and decided that Mrs Thatcher was right to fight the miners, right to pursue economic policies that have caused mass unemployment and right to cock a snook at the Commonwealth by resisting sanctions against South Africa'.

SO WHY HAS the *Sunday Times* story caused such a stir, when its main ingredients were already in the public domain? Part of the answer can be found in *The Gallup Survey of Britain*, published this week (Croom Helm, £19.95). Drawing on a wealth of Gallup data over the years, it charts, among other things, the evaporation of Mrs Thatcher's reputation since she became Prime Minister.

Divisive, she falls

Q. Here are some things people have said about Mrs Thatcher. For each of them, would you tell me whether you agree or disagree?

	April 1979 %	Jan 1986 %	Change 1979-1986
She divides the country	37	74	+37
She knows about the problems of the cost of living	73	40	−33
Her ideas are destructive not constructive	25	51	+26
She is not in touch with the working class ordinary people	52	77	+25
She thinks a lot of herself	54	78	+24
She is a snob, talks down to people	37	60	+23

The table below illustrates what has happened. From time to time Gallup asks people whether they agree or disagree with each of 18 statements about Mrs Thatcher. The table shows the six statements where the greatest movement has occurred. In each case voters have become substantially more ciritical. Twice as many people today think she divides the country and that her ideas are destructive. Ten million more people reckon she is out of touch with popular feeling.

In other words, the underlying sentiments attributed to the Queen are precisely those held by a growing majority of her subjects. This, I believe, is what gives the *Sunday Times* story its potency. It portrays a conflict between an hereditary monarch who is 'in touch' with her subjects and an elected Prime Minister who is not. In democratic theory, Mrs Thatcher is supposed to be the voice of the British people; in reality the Queen is appearing to give that voice its more authentic expression.

If that conflict provides the makings of a constitutional crisis, two questions need to be answered quite distinctly: who is to blame? and, what should be done?

If we assume that the Queen was not personally involved in the decision to brief the *Sunday Times* (and the earlier leaks, from the miners' strike to Whitelaw's slip last week, all came from government sources), then the most she can be charged with is holding views in tune with the majority of her subjects and Commonwealth leaders. The person whose increasing remoteness from public and Commonwealth opinion has strained Palace-Downing Street relations is Mrs Thatcher. Any crisis that erupts over the future of the Commonwealth will be the Prime Minister's responsibility.

It does not follow, however, that the Queen should actively seek to impede Mrs Thatcher's policies, however distasteful she finds them. As both sovereign of Great Britain and Head of the Commonwealth, she could well find herself in a difficult, even contradictory position. Nobody has ever insisted in so many words that the Queen should pay more heed to Mrs Thatcher than, say, Kenneth Kaunda. The myth that all Commonwealth States are equal in the eyes of the Queen has been allowed to coexist with the manifest fact that she is British and not Zambian.

If Mrs Thatcher insists on demolishing the myth in order to sustain the substance, there is a precious little the Queen can or should do about it. It is up to the British people (or, in certain circumstances, the Tory Party) to unseat Mrs Thatcher. The sooner the better; meanwhile all the Queen can do is sit still, bite her fingernails — and enjoy her growing family. □

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SPY TRIAL BY TELEVISION

Three months ago, Channel 4 claimed to have found an undetected 'Czech agent'. But the Special Branch say they found 'insufficient evidence to support any action'. The programme-makers say the police are covering-up MI5's incompetence; the 'spy' says that he was falsely accused by a dishonest acquaintance, and lied to by the programme makers. DUNCAN CAMPBELL, PATRICK FORBES and JOLYON JENKINS report

Derek Donaldson (below), and the man he said was a spy, Brian Gentleman

Duncan Baxter/Sunday Times

Channel 4

BRIAN GENTLEMAN is an uncertain, slow-thinking character, the antithesis of a civil service high-flyer. He has been employed for six years as a clerical assistant in the Department of Trade and Industry. Last autumn, he was befriended by television journalists who told him that he had been selected for a special 'People Living and Working in London Survey'. Two 20/20 Vision employees then met him at least once a week for about six months, affording him reasonably generous hospitality. In return, he responded about his life and times.

The sting came this April when he was invited to spend a weekend with the TV team at a Cotswolds cottage. There, he suddenly learned that their real interest in his life was sensationally to expose him as a Czech spy. They told him that he had been brought away on the trip to 'protect him from the press'.

Ten minutes later, 20/20 Vision went on the air. Next day's papers were already printing front page stories about him. A dossier of evidence was simultaneously delivered to Scotland Yard. International news agencies were soon reporting the unearthing of yet another British agent for the Soviet bloc.

The 20/20 Vision programme claimed that Gentleman had 'passed military secrets behind the Iron Curtain' and that he was 'a Czech agent'. They did not detail their evidence against Gentleman, which consists entirely of confessions he made to the two men who befriended him. The nub of the allegations was that a Czech diplomat who had talked to Gentleman in his local pub had thereby obtained officially secret information from him. Gentleman has never denied meeting the man, talking to him, or believing that he was a diplomat. But he now denies the information described changed hands.

The man, who introduced himself only as 'Mick', was actually Colonel Miroslav Merhaut — then the military attache at the Czech Embassy. There is little doubt that Merhaut was an intelligence officer who would have wished to recruit Gentleman as a spy, if it was worth doing so. But did Gentleman really tell 'Mick' secret information from his work at the DTI? The idea that Gentleman did pass confidential information had come only from an Edinburgh crook called Derek Donaldson, whom Gentlemen knew from school.

Although Channel 4 were evidently satisfied that the programme was firmly based, there are grounds for serious doubt about the value of their evidence. The programme understated the dishonestly and overstated the credibility of Donaldson, their only witness against Gentleman. Allegations of espionage were never put to Gentleman, on screen.

The police investigation has not resulted in any charges against Gentleman. Investigating officers even told him and other interviewees that instead of espionage charges, he might be facing prosecution for perjured affidavits and wasting police time. Meanwhile, TV's watchdog body, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) is to investigate a complaint from Gentleman's parents about the allegedly misleading presentation and dishonest methods used by the programme.

THE COMPLAINT of misrepresentation concerns the credibility of Derek Donaldson, and the way he was presented. Donaldson was said to be running a 'successful property business'. But Donaldson did not appear in vision, and was allowed to use the alias 'Adrian'. While he spoke, viewers glimpsed a man in a Jaguar, creating the false impression that Donaldson was wealthy and respectable.

20/20 Vision did make it clear that Donaldson had criminal convictions, and that he had spent time in prison. But these offences were said by the programme to be 'on a totally different matter', while Donaldson himself shrugged them off in his interview, untruthfully, as 'some company offences'. The programme did not state that:

- Donaldson was their only source of evidence that Gentleman was a Czech agent, from which investigations had began;
- They knew that a year before he identified Gentleman to them, Donaldson had been convicted of offences of dishonesty. He had pleaded guilty to two groups of 34 charges of fraud, serving six months in prison;
- They had evidence that Donaldson, rather than Gentleman, had attempted to obtain DTI information for the Czechs.

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Nor did the programme examine the actual character of Donaldson's 'successful property business' or find out that, at the time the programme went out, it had flopped.

Donaldson is now on the run, and is wanted for questioning by the Serious Crimes Squad of Lothians and Borders Police. They have been investigating allegations that he obtained houses on personal mortgages by making false declarations to building societies. He then filled them with young men on the dole, whose lodgings allowances they paid to him. This was the basis of his business, D and S Properties.

The house where Donaldson was living when the programme was made has been sold, and his HP car has been repossessed. Between January and May this year, he has been wanted for bad debts totalling over £2,000. After selling up, Donaldson moved to the home of his partner in D and S Properties, Grant Sutherland. But Sutherland's house was raided early in June, and police found their business papers. Sutherland is now in Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow, awaiting trial for a separate £54,000 fraud.

There is evidence that Donaldson has at least twice offered acquaintances large sums of money to obtain secret information for espionage purposes. In the 'confession' on which 20/20 Vision otherwise relies, Gentleman recounts how Donaldson approached him in London and offered him £1,500 for secret information about Rolls-Royce engines. In the confession affidavit Gentleman says that he refused the offer, and reported Donaldson's approach to the DTI security department.

Another acquaintance of Donaldson's, who has known him for more than five years, made a statement to Edinburgh police in April about a gay blackmail plot devised by Donaldson. He had been offered up to £30,000 by Donaldson to install a secret camera in his bedroom ceiling, so as to photograph, compromise and blackmail serving soldiers with whom he has sexual relationships.

We have confirmed that Edinburgh police have obtained evidence about this matter, and that they now wish to question Donaldson about a series of other alleged sexual offences involving teenage male tenants in his houses. One of the cases involves sex with a boy under 16, and another concerns a teenager who was allegedly drugged before having sex.

Since Donaldson is in hiding, we have been unable to discuss these allegations with him. Asked if the omission of details of Donaldson's record of dishonesty might not have affected viewers' judgments as to his reliability in accusing Gentleman, producer Claudia Milne said this week that the programme did not try to deceive viewers about Donaldson. 'If it was not clear that he was a dishonest person, I regret that — it was not our intention to make him appear more salubrious than he was.' They had found him reliable on some other stories, she said. But had 20/20 Vision made enquiries in Edinburgh's gay community, in which Donaldson has been active for years, it would have been virtually impossible to avoid discovering that he was widely known and reviled as a confidence trickster.

TIPPED OFF by Donaldson, programme researchers had at first secretly watched the west London hostel where Gentleman lives. But they could not identify him. So to get access to Gentleman, 20/20 Vision admit they made up the story about the 'Survey'. Researcher Gerry Gable then went to the hostel management, and obtained permission to film residents inside the hostel. It was all a hoax, devised to get film of Gentleman.

20/20 Vision do not dispute that they wrote Gentleman's confessional affidavits for him, or that they deliberately misled him and other about their reasons for talking to him. But they claim that all the admissions made in his affidavits are based on remarks he made during the time that he was befriended by Gable and another programme employee. 20/20 Vision say that Gentleman was not given any inducement to confess, or put under any duress, and deny that leading questions were used to persuade Gentleman of the truth of the story that Donaldson had suggested to them. They say also that many of these numerous meetings were secretly tape recorded by Gable, and that he corrected and amended the affidavits they wrote for him to sign.

But all but two tape recordings have now been 'wiped', 20/20 Vision director Claudia Milne said this week. There is thus no surviving corroborative evidence as to how Gentleman actually came to 'confess'. The two tapes which do survive, having been 'found in the cutting room', do record Gentleman reading out parts of a draft of one affidavit. Earlier this week, 20/20 Vision played to the *New Statesman* a six minute edited extract from one of the surviving tapes. They refused to play the beginning or ending of the tapes, so we have no knowledge as to whether they reveal circumstances in which he was induced to read out to journalists a document that, if accurate, put him in jail.

In the extract we were allowed to hear, Gentleman reads a passage saying that he was 'able to supply him (the diplomat) with detailed classified confidential and top secret information from our files in response to most of our questions and areas of interest . . . I handed over one piece of paper'. Gentleman can be heard correcting some of the statements in the affidavit, and reading out others.

Gentleman now says that he became confused, and was induced to mislead himself into reconstructing his acquaintance with 'Mick' because of the constant questioning by the researchers:

> Gable did the dictating and I added bits in. He got me to admit things that I knew couldn't possibly have happened, but he had been so crafty he got me admitting that it actually had happened. He was clever at that.

In the passage we have quoted, Gentleman does indeed falsely imply he had access to top secret information.

But it should be stressed at this point that Gentleman's reliability and ability to recall past events accurately, as is clear from the above account, is wholly suspect. Little that he says can clearly be trusted, whether about his dealings with 20/20 Vision or about his pub acquaintance, 'Mick'. For example, last week Gentleman signed another affidavit in which he repudiates the allegations in the affidavits he signed for 20/20 Vision. His new affidavit says there is 'no truth' in his previous admissions. All his affidavits contain clear inaccuracies; we have found that in conversation he is frequently inconsistent, easily confused, and always grateful for personal attention. What might be his motives in admitting espionage?

20/20 Vision say that he was glad to get a burden of guilt off his chest. They say that they persuaded him that their possession of the affidavits would be a valuable 'insurance policy' if he were ever contacted again. But they didn't confront him on camera with accusations of espionage, producer Claudia Milne now says, because 'he was a vulnerable young man who might have run away. . . We were concerned for his welfare.'

The day after transmission, Special Branch detectives spent 8 hours questioning Gentleman, who signed a 75-page statement. In the statement, he first confessed to espionage, he says; then he denied it, after 'I began to realise that I had been used'. At the end of the police interrogation, Gentleman was neither arrested, charged, taken into custody or put on bail. He was not asked to hand in his passport. Although still suspended from his work while his future is decided, he remains, then as now, on full pay — in contrast to other recent Official Secrets Act suspects like Clive Ponting, who faced much less serious charges. It is therefore clear that the police rapidly formed a firm view about the case and the 'evidence' with which they had been presented, and did not think that serious charges were likely.

20/20 Vision say this must have been because MI5 had intervened to ensure that their incompetence would be covered up. But they admit that this is speculative.

In their programme, 20/20 Vision repeatedly stressed that Gentleman was a lonely, vulnerable young man with a weak personality. He was, they said, 'easy prey'. In exchange for a few drinks, they alleged, he told the Czech what he wanted to know .

The way that Gentleman was treated raises serious questions about the methods of investigative journalism. There is no dispute that 20/20 Vision gave Gentleman far more free drinks, hospitality and personal attention than the Czech Secret Service. Since it is well known to psychiatrists that lonely and weak personalities are easily influenced by authority figures, and can in such circumstances readily pour out what they think their listeners want to hear, there was a clear but undischarged obligation on the programme makers — who themselves repeatedly stressed Gentleman's weak character — to prove to their audience that they had not caused Gentleman to make up the confession they wanted to hear.

IBA guidelines require TV investigations not to turn into 'trial by television'. But the vulnerable Brian Gentleman was accused, questioned, and prosecuted without ever knowing that charges had been laid against him, let alone being allowed to defend himself in a fair hearing. It is unlikely that any court of law would fail to comment on the erasure of crucial corroborating evidence as to how his confessions came to be made. But with what evidence remains, the BCC will have to adjudicate on Gentleman v Gentleman, and so deliver a verdict on how 20/20 Vision arranged his trial. □

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

All right, so Mrs Thatcher's a tyrant. But how would opposition leaders practise the art of Cabinet government? asks ROB SHEPHERD

WHAT HOPE is there for Cabinet government? Precious little if Margaret Thatcher does what no prime minister has done this century and wins a third election in a row. End of argument — not only in articles like this, but also in the Cabinet room itself. Ministerial collective responsibility will be superseded by diminished responsibility, as with Thatcher's approach to the Westland and Libyan incidents. The 'Spitting Image' interpretation of life at the Cabinet table wold be vindicated, in spades.

In the event of an outright Labour victory, Neil Kinnock would face his first major crisis before he arrived in Downing Street, as sterling slumped on the foreign exchanges. A Labour lead in the opinion polls ahead of the election would trigger a run on the pound before the campaign began.

The economic crisis for an incoming Labour Government would almost certainly be intensified through strong United States reaction to Labour's plan to remove US nuclear bases from British soil. Tony Benn reveals in the final programme in the Channel Four series 'All the Prime Minister's Men' that he would fancy the job as the minister who goes to Washington to tell the President what to do with cruise missiles but warns that Britain would, as a result, 'be subjected to massive economic pressure by the Americans'.

Yet the pressures and uncertainties during the early days of Kinnock's first administration would be hugely magnified if his were a minority government or — possibly after a second inconclusive election — a coalition government. The City and the White House might be relieved that Labour had failed to win a majority, but life in Whitehall would be dominated by the daily scramble for political survival as deals were done — and undone — on every aspect of government business.

David Owen insists that unless a minority government, Labour or Tory, negotiates its Queen's Speech 'line by line' with him and David Steel, they would vote it down. But the Liberals and the SDP have yet to resolve their own division on Polaris. And in a 'hung parliament' the obstacles to any pact or coalition which included on the one hand Labour and the SDP, or on the other Tories and Liberals, would soon be evident.

With no party winning an overall majority, the 'Yes, Minister' view of government would be confirmed. As ministers spent their time cobbling up one deal after another, power would pass to the civil service, the permanent presence in Whitehall, who would keep the show on the road. Perhaps this would not worry the Liberal/SDP Alliance all that much — they probably suspect that most mandarins share their prejudices. But they should remember that the last such period of economic and political uncertainty for government, between 1973 and 1977 from the Yom Kippur War to the fixing of the Lib-Lab pact, exhausted ministers and killed Tony Crosland.

THE 22 men and women who sit at the Cabinet have to grapple with the consequences of the collapse of British industry while formulating policies for economic regeneration. As the gusher of North Sea oil subsides, the return of 1960s-style balance of payments crises is threatened; and the hole in Treasury finances will open up as the one-off windfall of state sell-offs comes to an end. Further agonised re-appraisals of public spending are on the cards.

But tomorrow's Cabinet to whom we look for answers to these problems will be hard pressed to keep their heads above water coping with one multitude of demands made on ministers' time. Modern departments of state generate colossal workloads; there are debates, committees and detailed questions to be dealt with in parliament, let alone constituency and party commitments.

How will the next government respond to these pressures? The traditional response this century has been for prime ministers to take more power to themselves. Lloyd George established his 'Garden Suburb' at Number Ten; Attlee made Cabinet more effective by developing Cabinet committees but kept most ministers in the dark over the decision to build a British A-bomb; Callaghan kept discussion on the future of Britain's nuclear deterrent and financial policy clear of Cabinet; and Thatcher has developed the manipulation of small ad hoc groups of sympathetic ministers to a fine art.

Kinnock is an adept operator in the shadow cabinet and through Labour's National Executive. He doesn't baulk at the probable need to take immediate executive action, before he has appointed most of his first Cabinet, to calm City nerves. But he rejects the quasi-presidential approach to government, which makes political sense as a contrast to Thatcher and as re-assurance to those voters worried by his lack of governmental experience but impressed by that of his senior colleagues.

But is there an indication of a further extension of prime ministerial power in Kinnock's interest in a prime minister's office 'like the Australian model'? The Australian PM's office has a staff of 400, compared with Number Ten's couple of dozen, and is often cited by British advocates of a full-blown PM's Department. But Kinnock argues for a small PM's office and envisages that it would work in conjunction with a revived 'Think Tank' briefing the full Cabinet, and with teams of two or three political advisers assisting each Secretary of State. He also proposes that the Cabinet should meet to review strategy,

All photos: City Syndication

Neil Kinnock, in the chair: 'OK, you lot. We've got two portfolios left. Paymaster General, David, or do you want the Ministry of Silly Walks?'

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perhaps at monthly intervals, in addition to the regular Thursday morning sessions.

KINNOCK'S RECIPE for Cabinet government is similar to the prescription of Tory Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, a man so steeped in the ethos of Cabinet decision-making that at the height of the Westland affair he felt constrained to issue a public reminder to Thatcher of the virtues of collective responsibility. Hurd favours reviving a Cabinet 'Think Tank', which he saw working at first hand during its most effective period when he was Ted Heath's political secretary. He also favours additional political support for ministers in their departments, along with sessions of Cabinet 'to take stock of its general strategy without always having the thrust of particular decisions to take'.

For the Alliance, in David Steel's words, 'the powers of the Prime Minister would automatically be diminished in a coalition government'. But would effective Cabinet government necessarily follow if, in Hurd's graphic phrase, there are people 'round the table who so far from working together have a habit of spitting at each other'?

Characteristically, Owen offers a hard-nosed caveat to the other, sanguine David: 'you've still got to have certain decisions that are taken by the prime minister'. Nor does the Doctor appear to have any sympathy for Michael Heseltine's protestations of constitutional impropriety over the manipulation of Cabinet committees: 'All prime ministers are going to manipulate Cabinet sub-committees and miscellaneous committees that are set up'. Is it too fanciful to see Owen playing Lloyd George to post-Thatcher Tories, and perhaps to Steel's Asquith?

Disgruntled ministers traditionally portray the Treasury as the stumbling block to Cabinet government. Messrs Benn, Shore and Heseltine are no exception, the latter now campaigning for a strong Industry Department to counter the Treasury's focus on City preoccupations. But Kinnock is unconvinced: 'It's much better to operate from within the Treasury, and to appoint a strong ministerial team.'

Modest measures to restore Cabinet government are unlikely to check the pressures which have increased, are increasing and will increase prime ministerial power — the immense patronage effectively transferred from the Crown to Number Ten; party domination of the Commons and the compelling power of loyalty to the party leader; the need for immediate co-ordinated responses by government to the media; the growth of international summitry, and so on.

Owen lines up with Benn in his attack on prime ministerial powers of patronage, but there are few takers for radical reform. Having accrued power, institutions rarely shed it voluntarily. The shape of things to come is far more likely to be fashioned in the prime minister's study at Number Ten than in the Cabinet room. □

Rob Shepherd produced 'The Shape of Things to Come', the last programme in the Channel Four series, 'All the Prime Minister's Men', broadcast on Thursday.

ATTACKS ON WOMEN

STOP IT *NOW*

Black women have organised their first demonstration against male violence for this Saturday 26 July. AMRIT WILSON analyses their dual oppression

ON 22 OCTOBER last year, an Asian woman, Balwant Kaur was killed by men who broke into the Asian Women's Refuge in the London Borough of Brent.

The next few days were extremely hard for the women in the refuge. Balwant's husband Bhagwan Singh was arrested and charged with murder but in the course of their investigation the police told journalists the address of the refuge (this is normally kept secret for the security of the women in it). Photographs of the building were shown on a Thames News programme and the address printed in a local paper. In the end the women living there had to leave to avoid further attacks on their privacy and possibly on their lives.

Shocked and angered by the incident and its aftermath, the women formed the 'Balwant Kaur campaign' and with the support of other women's groups in and outside Brent picketed the magistrates courts in which committal hearings were held in January this year — the case is now due to come up at the Old Bailey in November. The pickets were extremely well attended. They attracted women angered by both the scale of violence faced by women, and their sense of powerlessness.

The pickets led to formation of Network of Women (NOW) against male violence, which includes groups such as the Rape Crisis Centre, Women Against Violence Against Women, and Southall Black Women's Centre. This Saturday NOW is holding its first national demonstration and rally.

NOW is also preparing a Charter Against Male Violence including demands not only about domestic violence but prostitution, pornography, state violence and medical violence. It is also taking up the question of the state's role in domestic violence. For example, what counselling and interventions do the government social services departments make when a woman facing violence and wanting to leave home is referred to them? According to Southall Black Women's Centre, and the Brent Asian Women's Refuge, Asian women in this position face firstly the racism of many white social workers and secondly the 'extremely oppressive and reactionary' attitudes of many Asian social workers — both male and female — who are now often seen as and even called 'Asian specialists'.

While white social workers have often simply 'told off and insulted Asian women for being difficult and indecisive', Asian social workers have come up with much more insidious remarks such as 'I understand what you are going through, but how will your children manage without the extended family? Go back home'; or, 'you're showing up our culture, go back to your husband'. As a worker at Southall Black Women's Centre put it: 'What we're saying is, just treat us like any other women who are suffering violence. Just because we are black and have extended families, it doesn't mean we should be oppressed.'

SOCIAL WORKERS in Brent and Southall were not willing or available to comment on these alleged attitudes and policies, but Southall Social Services referred me to Shantiniketan, a women's centre in Southall funded by the DHSS. Sandy Wilson, an Asian social worker there said 'Counselling an Asian woman is quite different from counselling a white woman. Asian women always fear divorce and they are more accepting of punishment'. But, I asked her, what happens when an Asian woman *wants* to leave home? 'Well, if she was in danger of course we would help her to leave. But if she was sitting there calculating divorce after 15-20 years of suffering in a marriage, then she has to consider other problems — for example if she gets a divorce, there will be difficulties for her children, particularly daughters. How is she going to marry them off, how will she contemplate old age and so on. So we make her aware of these difficulties.'

Whatever the implications of this kind of counselling for social worker-client relationships, it serves, in the name of a multicultural approach, to bolster up the most sexist structures in the community. It also presents an incorrect, extremely negative, even racist, view of Asian culture, where women by definition must accept oppression.

If this is what women who want to leave home face, men who want to get rid of their wives apparently fare rather differently. According to Muneeza Inam, a worker at the Brent Asian Women's Refuge, 'there is a disturbingly high proportion of Afro-Caribbean and Asian women in mental hospitals like Shenley and St Bernards. There have been cases where Asian women have been sectioned (under the Mental Health Act) for the most trivial reasons. A pattern is emerging among Asians, where the husband gets rid of his wife by getting her sectioned with the apparent approval of the authorities. In one case the man would beat up his wife and when she was hysterical call the police and have her sectioned. He would say "she doesn't cook, she goes around topless in front of the kids, and that's mad behaviour for an Asian woman" and this would be accepted.'

In effect, the most oppressive stereotypes of Asian women are being created, and if they don't abide by them they are being labelled not only by their families but by the British establishment as deviants who pose a threat to society. □

Women Demonstrate Against Male Violence, National Demo & Rally, Saturday 26 July, 1986. Assemble Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London, 12.00.

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MEDIA

The Hero's Return

PAUL FOOT

HE TIGHTENED his uniform belt several notches to compensate for the one and a half stone lost during 11 months of anguish. And he revealed: "I have been to hell and back every day".'

I quote (perhaps for the last time) from the prose of Declan Cunningham of the *Daily Express*, which gave three-quarters of a page on Wednesday of last week to a 'great story'.

PC Chester, a West Midlands policeman was going back on the beat after a long absence, to a 'hero's welcome'.

The *Star* improved on its sister paper's coverage. For it, the story of PC Brian Chester was the *most important one of the day*. He was on the front page, where 'they' were singing 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow'. The *Daily Mail* set its star feature writer, John Edwards, all the way to Coventry to cover the hero's return. *The Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Guardian, Today,* the *Mirror*, and the *Sun* all followed suit. All revelled in the cheers of the crowd which varied in size from 50 (*Mirror*) to 100 (*Times*). Here was an exultant housewife to say how wonderful Brian was and even a woman with multiple sclerosis in a wheelchair to add her hoorays. It was a cheerful, jouful scene. None of the reporters (and certainly none of the photographers) dared to spoil it with even a word of criticism.

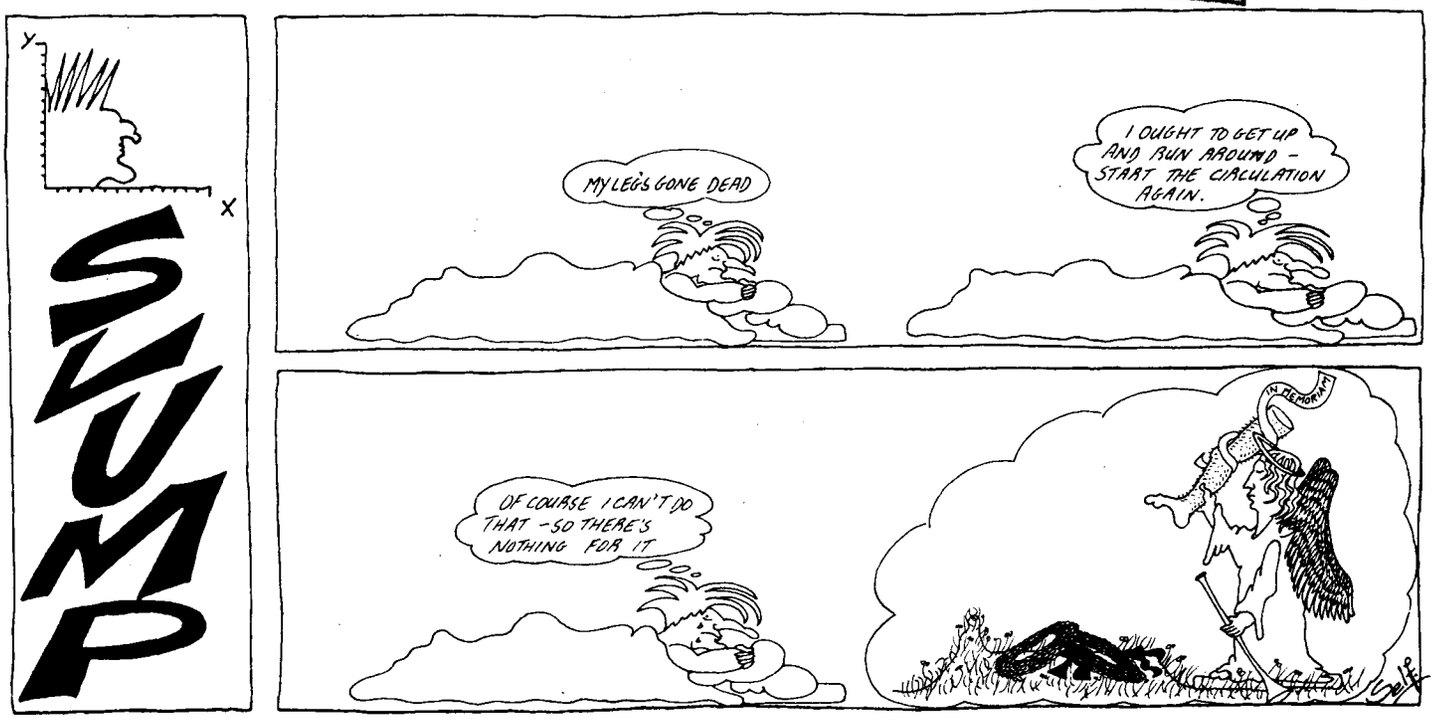
Just a moment. What had PC Brian Chester done to deserve this unanimous accolade, these acres of prime space in all our newspapers? He shot a five year old boy dead. On a raid on a house in Birmingham last year, he somehow managed to fire his revolver into the little boy's cot and kill him. He was not charged with murder. He was found not guilty of manslaughter. There will be no disciplinary charges.

Now he was a hero. There was nothing spontaneous about his heroism. The West Midlands police, who have rotten record with the slag-happy use of firearms, decided to make him one. They arranged a press conference and a 'photo call' to welcome the constable back to his beat, and they spread the word around so far in advance so that a suitable crowd could be collected to do their bit for the cameras.

The episode was stage-managed from first to last, with one purpose: to improve the image of a tarnished police force. Reporting it required no work and no talent. Above all, it was deeply offensive to the family of the dead boy. The very least the West Midlands police and their admirers in the press could have done after such an appalling blunder was to leave the matter alone, and to allow the future career of PC Brian Chester to slide into well-deserved obscurity.

Yet all of them took the bait, and even 'touched up' the police version with charming pictures of PC Chester with a little boy in his arms. Only the *Guardian* made the slightest objection, and that in a leader less than a quarter the size of original uncritical coverage. Only the *Guardian* approached John Shorthouse's mother to ask here what she thought of the whole obscene charade. It was a great day for police PR, and another dreadful one for journalism. □

TRAGIC COP GOES BACK ON BEAT
By MARTIN STOTE
POLICEMAN who acci-lly shot dead a five-year-y went back on the beat day
eering, 60-strong crowd
Pc Brian Chester, 11
er a jury had cleared him laughter.
ang For He's a Jolly Good
d applauded. Pc Chester
he received the handshakes
p. But there was sadness
Disguise
egedy of little John
has made him vow never
un again.
s 1½ stones in weight since
shot during a raid on his
hester had to lighten his
guise the fact that the
set wore 11 months ago is
m now.
to hell and back every
Officer who shot boy back on beat
By Craig Seton
Police Constable Brian Chester was warmly welcomed when he returned to the beat yesterday for the first time since the shooting of John Shorthouse, aged five, in a raid on a Birmingham home.
He said: "The last year has been a terrible ordeal. I have been to hell and back every day."
PC Chester promised never to touch a gun again as he donned a constable's uniform for the first time in 11 months.
He admitted, too, that in spite of the welcome, he could face a whispering campaign on the council estate in Coventry.
Great to have you back, PC who shot boy told
by WAYNE FRANCIS
POLICEMAN Brian Chester, who shot dead a five-year-old boy, was greeted by a crowd of well wishers yesterday when he went back on the beat.
Wearing his old uniform he said: "I cannot believe what is happening. I have been through hell and back every day."
PC Chester, 33, was back on duty for the first time after being suspended for 11 months.
After chatting with fellow officers in the canteen at Fletchampstead police station, he returned to his old patrol in Willenhall, Coventry, surrounded by Pressmen and cameras.
Picture: DAVE ADAM


SLUMP
MY LEG'S GONE DEAD
I OUGHT TO GET UP AND RUN AROUND - START THE CIRCULATION AGAIN.
OF COURSE I CAN'T DO THAT - SO THERE'S NOTHING FOR IT
IN MEMORIAM

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DIARY

Claudia Wright

Crete

It is easy to miss the road to Polyrrhenia, on the far western side of Crete. There is no signpost, and the road maps don't help very much. You might never know to look for the village at all for, although it is one of a handful of sites on Crete that have been continuously inhabited since neolithic times, most of the guidebooks ignore it. It is thus something of a mystery how so many thousands of visitors have found their way over the years to the modest door of Vasileos Alexandchakis. There can be no doubt about the numbers, for they are registered in a dozen heavily bound volumes on a table inside his door. There they are — signatures, calling cards, letters and snapshots sent to Vasileos Alexandchakis from all over the world to say they will always remember this extraordinary spot in Crete.

You bump into him apparently by accident. He sits just inside the threshold of his house and leaps out as you come up the zigzag village path and stop at a fork not knowing which branch to follow. At first glance he looks like an amiable goblin, with large boots, baggy pants, a full beard, and a pompom on his cap. Vasileos Alexandchakis knows your predicament. He has seen it thousands of times before and he will resolve it for you; but first you must be his guest, enter his house, eat some oranges and almonds he and his wife have grown on the hillside and be part for a few moments of the long line of humanity that has toiled up this hill to pay tribute to his village — and to him.

The guide books will tell you that the church of the 99 martyrs used to stand at Polyrrhenia and beneath it a temple of the Roman period and deeper down relics of Minoan times and before. There is chicken wire across a hole that leads into the foundations and someone's elegant rooster stands guard. But the enduring fame of Polyrrhenia comes not from these relics of man, but from the brilliant display of nature that begins in the early Spring and lasts all Summer. In the Spring, when I hunt for the rare Cretan Orchids, the hillsides are a mass of golden yellow — Spurge, Mimosa, Asphodels. In the Summer, they change to the pinks of Holy Thistle, Flowering Thyma and the Chaste Tree (Vitex Agnus-Castus). In ancient times, the fragrant seeds of the Vitex were thought to repress one's sexual urges and, contradictorily, to have the potency of an aphrodisiac.

○

The beaches in Crete are in pristine state this year and one sign of that is the great number of sea urchins that make their home on the underwater rocks by the shore. This is a reassurance and a warning to the unknown swimmer. For urchins guarantee you the water is free of pollution. At the same time, if you step on one, you will have a devil of a job getting the spines out of your foot. You can come prepared with a pair of old sandshoes. But if you are unclad and do get spiked, as my mother did while looking upward, admiring the cloudless sky and the vineyards of Sphinari, you will find that the proprietor of even the most remote taverna has a needle and antiseptic at the ready. He can deftly unspike your foot in less time than it takes to drink a cool bottle of Logado, the fine Cretian rosé and before your plate of cooked urchins reaches the table.

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A few miles west of Xania, beside the main road, the Germans have erected a memorial to their murderous attack on Crete 45 years ago, when several thousand parachutists were dropped and, after bitter fighting with Greek, Australian, British and New Zealand defenders, the Allies were forced to retreat and Crete fell under a four-year long Nazi occupation. It is a dreadful memorial — a vast eagle carved in sandstone, its wings aloft, has buried its claws in a round globe. Some Christian-Democrat from the War Memorials Ministry in Bonn no doubt thought this was a fitting tribute to one of the first battles to demonstrate how a relatively small number of airborne troops, with air superiority, can defeat a much larger defending force lacking air defence. But I cannot understand why the Cretans allowed it to be installed — or to remain. In Athens, the bust of President Harry Truman has been the repeated target of bomb blasts by groups protesting American intervention in Greece after the Germans were defeated. Truman finally bit the dust last March, but so far the German eagle has kept its claws in Crete quite intact.

ROGER WODDIS

A limp argument

'I was told firmly: "There will never be an erection on the BBC" ' — Peter Webb, art historian and lecturer, quoting a BBC spokesman on the Split Screen programme about pornography.

'We can't have J.T. rising,
Although the picture's blurred,'
The spokesman said firmly
(If that's the right word).
Whatever else the punter
Is allowed to see,
There will never be a cock-up
On the BBC.

We need to be protected
Against the naked truth:
It upsets old ladies
And arouses the youth.
You can shoot and stab and strangle,
That's harmless, you see,
But there'll never be a cock-up
On the BBC.

It's bad enough depicting
A baby at the breast,
A pair of turtles mating
Or a salad that's undressed;
But to quote a well-bred wally,
As he stirred his tea,
'There will never be a cock-up
On the BBC.'

The Battle of Crete cost 6,580 Germans their lives and almost 16,000 Greek and Allied soldiers. *NS* readers don't need to be reminded what a military incompetent and treacherous plotter Winston Churchill was in those days, as he first sacrificed Greece to preserve the Empire in Egypt, and then betrayed the Greek national resistance to restore his pals, the Glucksburg family to the Greek throne they had forfeited by their own acts and by the choice of most Greeks. It is just as well to keep these thoughts in mind when contemplating the many plaques — far more modest than the German memorial — that are set into hillsides to record the heroism of the Cretans who carried on the resistance. I took along *The Cretan Runner* (published by John Murray, London 1955), a magnificent but now almost forgotten epic of that period and of the Cretan countryside, written by George Psychoundakis and translated into English by Patrick Leigh Fermor. Psychoundakis was a shepherd and self-taught writer, who served as a courier in the partisan network of Crete. Fermor was one of the British Intelligence Agents who directed him. Fermor reminds the reader early on that 'the fact that there was no mention (of the Cretan resistance) in the relevant volume of Sir Winston Churchill's *History of the War* has caused pain and disappointment'.

○

For a British view of the air war over Greece and Crete at that time, I read Roald Dahl's first collection of stories, and one of his best, saddest, but least funny. Called *Over to You* (1945), it is his part-autobiographical tribute to the doomed young RAF pilots of the Greek, North African and Palestine campaigns. If such sombre reading seems not the stuff of which your holiday might be made, take heart — there is a new battle on. Every British visitor to Greece this year is doing his or her sterling bit to defeat Ronald Reagan's vicious campaign to damage tourism to Greece, sabotage the Greek economy and bring the Socialist government down. So far this season British visitors have been on the rise, offsetting the fact that the American eagle — claws or no claws — has hardly landed at all.

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Camera Press

COMMONWEALTH — WHO NEEDS IT?

TUNDE OBADINA argues that the most destructive of the Commonwealth's many contradictions is the role of the Queen herself, holding the show together while heading the richest and bossiest of its nations. Mrs Thatcher's queenly arrogance at Nassau reeked of imperial past and got up the noses even of fellow capitalists

It is not what it was when it started, it is no longer a club for nations founded by migrants from Europe. It is now a collection of former colonies who have been persuaded to join the Commonwealth through oblique hints that they will benefit from it. In the event they have found the Commonwealth failing to live up to the promise.

WHEN Dr Mohathir Mohamed, the Malaysian Prime Minister, spoke these words in the opening session of last year's meeting of Commonwealth Heads of State, in Nassau, he expressed the growing feeling of most Third World members of the association. The goodwill of the majority of Third World members of the Commonwealth has worn thin. The association stands on the brink of disintegration; the Edinburgh 'friendly' games have been reduced to a sporting match between the old club of Anglo-Saxon nations with a sprinkling of mostly dependent territories.

But the conflict runs deeper than Britain's refusal to impose sanctions against South Africa. It arises from the inherent contradictions of the Commonwealth. Like every major international organisation, including the United Nations, the rules were drawn up and the agenda set by the rich and powerful participants long before most Third World nations applied to join such clubs.

The Commonwealth was formed in 1931 as a permanent expression of 'family union' between Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. The Commonwealth was ostensibly formed as an association of equals. But as more and more colonies secured their independence and were invited to sit at the table of their former master it became apparent that the relationship was not totally transformed: the Commonwealth, like the Empire before it, was still a relationship between unequals and the

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Imperial Lord still expected to sit at the head of the table.

If there was any doubt about the predominance of Britain, the reality has been brought home by the arrogant, paternalistic and patronising style of leadership of Margaret Thatcher. In Nassau last year not only did the British Prime Minister defy the wishes of the rest of her colleagues for collective economic sanctions against South Africa, she positively gloated over her success. She appeared in the image of the imperial mother chiding her children into line.

Despite the apparent brave face of accomplishment put on by many Commonwealth leaders, they left Nassau disappointed and humiliated by the outcome of their much heralded clash with the Iron Lady. Her dogged, no compromise manner of dealing with fellow prime ministers and presidents may be consistent with her general style of politics, but in the context of a relationship between a former coloniser and her former colonies, it appeared racist.

IN NASSAU Thatcher won the first round. The Commonwealth survived to totter on, and South Africa gained six months' grace. But everyone knew there would be another bout. When the Eminent Persons Group visited South Africa and told Commonwealth leaders what most of them already knew the stage was set for the second round.

Commonwealth leaders are once again confronted with the internal contradictions of an organisation that is impotent, which can't advance the interests of the majority of its members. In a sense Thatcher gave the Commonwealth's Third World nations an ultimatum: 'Keep quiet or do your worst'. In the face of such a challenge those countries that have boycotted the Edinburgh games have answered in a relatively mild fashion.

Their muted response reflects the deep-seated reluctance of Commonwealth Third World leaders to take anti-British action. For to take such antagonistic measures is to act against a part of themselves that was brought up to be British. Beyond their upbringing there is an ideological affinity between their leadership and the British ruling class: they are all capitalists. However, as it seems unlikely that Thatcher will concede sanctions the conflict will accelerate, placing pressure on Commonwealth leaders to be seen to be supporting Black South Africans and to take more daring steps, which can only further disintegration of the Commonwealth.

YET EVEN IF THE Commonwealth survives the test of sanctions, the rot has set in. The Third World leaders are finding it increasingly difficult to justify its existence. As former colonies develop their own sense of national pride it become more difficult to square with its membership of an association that is clearly a colonial hangover, symbolised by the permanent status of the British Queen as its head.

Many of the initial material benefits of maintaining formal links with the former colonial master have with time been eroded. Britain's series of Immigration Acts have fectively closed the doors on the non-white mmonwealth citizens it once welcomed as cheap labour. Commonwealth students no longer enjoy the free education here which was once so useful for Britain to introduce the future elite of its colonies to the 'British way of life'. The association is seen merely as a means of perpetuating dependence on the West. At the Kuru national conference to debate foreign policy organised earlier this year by the Nigerian government it was unanimously recommended that Nigeria withdraw from the Commonwealth because it serves to perpetuate a capitalist world view and impede the pursuit of independent foreign policy. Whether the Nigerian government follows this advice hangs in the balance, pressured as it is by a powerful pro-Commonwealth business lobby.

If relations with Britain are not conducive to maintaining goodwill within the Commonwealth, why don't the member nations simply expel Britain rather than cause the death of the larger body? The answer is, predictably, the comparative wealth of the member states. Britain is the stalwart of the Commonwealth, contributing 25 per cent of its finances. The Old Commonwealth members make up the bulk of finances.

Not only would it be difficult for the impoverished Third World members to finance the Commonwealth, there seems little point in the association without Britain. There are other international forums in which Third World nations meet. The only particular link shared by Commonwealth members is their common experience of British colonial rule, but through time the legacies of this rule, in education and legal systems, for instance, have changed. The Commonwealth is now made up of societies with varying political systems and ideological orientation. As a Third World organisation it would have little rationale for existing beyond the fact that its members speak the same second language.

Just as the Third World can survive without the Commonwealth, so can Britain, but it has a lot to lose. Although Britain's economic domination of its ex-colonies has been eroded during the past couple of decades by the US, Japan and other European nations, it still enjoys substantial trade links, which it cannot afford to lose. British firms are well aware of the fact that there is little that Britain can provide which Third World nations cannot get from other Western nations, which explains why major British companies doing business in Africa have, through the British Industry Committee on South Africa, urged Thatcher to accept limited sanctions and ban new investments in South Africa. They are taking seriously threats by countries like Nigeria to take punitive economic measures against Britain.

The existence of the Commonwealth provides Britain with the sort of kudos in its international relations and links with the 'glorious past' that the former colonial power still hangers after. The Commonwealth remains a symbol of the British Empire, is manifested in the person of the Queen who has taken seriously her duties towards Commonwealth nations. In her contentious 1983 Christmas broadcast she warned, 'The greatest problem in the world today remains the gap between rich and poor countries, and we shall not begin to close this gap until we hear less about nationalism and more about interdependence.' During the Nassau conference she conspicuously spent most of her unstructured time in conversation with the African delegations.

The Queen is wedded to the idealistic conception of a family of nations from which she draws her personal *raison d'être*. But as with all the best family sagas, sharing out the family's wealth has provided cause for family feuding.

That the feuding has not turned fratricidal is due in large measure to the tolerance of Third World family members.

But the Queen must know that the time approaches when nations are forced to go their own ways she will be left in an undignified and powerless position, unable to be at the same time head of the disintegrating Commonwealth and head of its imperial nation. □

THE SCANDAL THAT NEVER WAS

'The shoot-down of KAL 007 on the night of 31 August/ 1 September 1983 gave a boost to President Reagan's Administration. At once, a set of Cold War measures which had previously been threatened passed through both elected Houses. Disarmament talks faltered, and the arms race quickened.

'On all sides, people believed the story which was circulated with much panache by Reagan's team . . . R.W. Johnson was one of the few people on either side of the Atlantic to resist. His articles in the *Guardian* drew a message from a Tory MP . . . to the head of Magdalen College, Oxford suggesting that Mr Johnson was 'not a fit person' to be a don there. He stuck to his sceptical view, however, and enriched it with meticulous research. **The result is not only a terrifying story . . . but a political exposé of the highest order.'**

READ PAUL FOOT ON R.W. JOHNSON ON THE SHOOT-DOWN OF KAL 007 IN THE *LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS.*

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US PUSHING REFORMS OFF COURSE

BRIAN WILSON on seven years of vision and bitter set backs

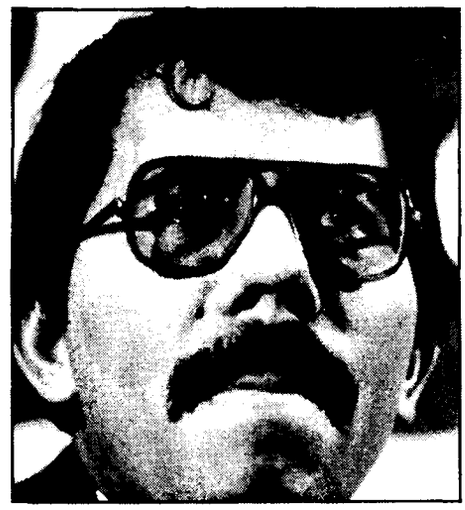
JUST 35 KILOMETRES from the Honduran border, in the town of Estelí, Nicaragua's political leadership attended a rally to mark the seventh anniversary of the 19 July 'Triumph' that brought the Sandinista front to power. It was, by Nicaraguan standards, a modest show of support for the government with around 60,000 present. The year's really big event will be the 25th anniversary celebration of the creation of the *Frente Sandinista.*

Estelí is a solidly Sandinista town, which occupied a special place in the events of 1979. Somoza had said he would flee the country if his forces lost Estelí — and that is exactly what happened. This year, it was also important to the Sandinistas to demonstrate that such a major gathering could be held with impunity so close to the border and the Contra camps on the other side. The road from Managua was closely guarded by militia, bridge-posts were sand-bagged and tight security enforced.

More than ever before there are constant reminders that Nicaragua is in a state of war which permeates every aspect of daily life. While the Contras have been unable to strike at Estelí, there have been plenty of chilling incidents in the surrounding area. Within the past month 34 peasants were killed when the Contra land-mined a bus 25 kilometres from here. The town is at present housing refugees from a nearby agricultural co-operative, where eight died when Reagan's 'freedom fighters' destroyed three warehouses full of seed potatoes gifted by the Netherlands — the kind of economic target they specialise in.

They only speech to the anniversary rally came from the President, Daniel Ortega — a sombre, sometimes angry, resumé of Nicaragua's current position. History, he declared, would judge Ronald Reagan as 'The Twin of Hitler' for what he is doing there. Nicaragua will seek a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to consider the refusal of the US government to recognise the jurisdiction of the International Court at the Hague, which last month found it guilty of breaching the UN charter, by sponsoring the Contra war, and of being liable for reparations.

'We said it, the court said it and the world recognises it,' declared Ortega, adding with undue optimism: 'the North American people recognise it.' Increasingly, Nicaragua is trying to appeal direct to American public opinion, having despaired of any kind of conciliation being possible at government level. Meanwhle, the Contras have turned their attention to winning European public



Camera Press

Ortega: hoping to sway the American people

opinion. In Britain a pro-Contra organisation was launched earlier this month, founded by the extreme right-wing former chair of the Federation of Conservative Students, David Hoile. The 'Committee for a Free Nicargua' claims it is funded by British businesses and admits to working with the US Heritage Foundation.

AFTER THE CONTRA aid vote in Congress, to supply them with a further 100 million dollars, the Sandinistas moved swiftly againt two sources of internal opposition. The newspaper *La Prensa* was closed down and two Church leaders, Bishop Vega and Monsignor Carballo, were banished from the country. A country at war, said Ortega, was entitled to defend itself against the opening of an 'internal front'. *La Prensa* had been financed by the CIA while the clerics had openly lobbied in the United States for the 100 million dollars, he said. The Sandinistas had long sought to avoid such illiberal hostages to fortune in the courting of world opinion. But they've now concluded that circumstances no longer allow them the luxury of great tolerance.

The war and the American-inspired trade blockade have resulted in severe shortages and cut-backs in social programmes, for which Nicaragua is more than ever dependent on outside aid. There are occasional stark reminders of just how tiny the Nicaraguan economy is. At the opening of a health centre in the southern town of Belen, funded through the Scottish Medical Aid for Nicaragua Campaign, I spoke to Dr Rogelio Samson, the deputy health minister. The country's drugs and medicines bill should, he said, be $47 million this year. But Nicaragua can afford only half of that, so many items are simply not available.

Diseases which had been eradicated — notably Malaria — are returning; a triumph for the 'American way'. On top of all this, a large part of the inadequate health budget is having to be diverted to war medicine — orthopaedics, physiotherapy, the building up of blood banks, the provision of fast transport for the wounded, and so on. As in most other aspects of Nicaraguan life, one feels sure that they will struggle on — but against odds that are as daunting as they are unjust, when the available resources could be so much better used.

Tragically, the war has held up the process of reform in many areas and has forced the government to be defensive and less generous spirited than when it first came to power. However in some crucial, though exceptional respects, the war has had the effect of radicalising the revolution. Notably, there is now a much-accelerated programme of agrarian reform. The Minister of Agriculture, Jaime Wheelock, is travelling the country to dispense title deeds to the *campesinos*, both individuals and co-operatives.

Until this year, the government would have preferred to leave the large, well-run farms alone because of their importance to the agricultural export sector. But, this was not an argument that appealed much to the land-starved peasantry and their support for the revolution was perceived to be waning. At the same time, the drop in world prices meant that export revenue was shrinking. A major policy change has been adopted, to put the emphasis on self-sufficiency rather than exporting: hence the large-scale breaking up of big farming units, for redistribution to the *campesinos.*

At Belen, I heard Wheelock explain to an audience of 5,000 that by the end of the year, the 200 big landowners in that region will be down to five per cent of the land, compared to 65 per cent in 1979. Agrarian reform will certainly strengthen support for the revolution in the countryside. The local priest, Father Raoul Hernandez, told me: 'Previously, the majority of these people had no land at all. It is a fundamental gain of the revolution. And if that gain is threatened, most of them are going to defend the land they have worked on with their sweat.'

But, as the government fully recognises, the change in emphasis will mean even fewer dollars coming into the country. And that in turn will mean fewer consumer goods for the middle classes of Managua. The direct consequence of the war is then to heighten the polarisation within Nicaragua, forcing those who have given ambivalent support to the revolution into making decisions about where their greater loyalties lie. □

Britain in the World Court

During the World Court ruling on *Military and Paramilitary activities in and against Nicargua (Nicaragua v United States)* the British judge, Sir Robert Jennings, distinguished himself by voting consistently in favour of the US. On nine out of 10 points Jennings voted against Nicaragua, generally alongside the US and West German judges and against the remaining 12 judges from round the world. That included rulings deciding that the US had acted against international law by laying mines in Nicaragua waters and attacking its ports.

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LETTERS

The colour anti-apartheid

Marga Holness, London N3

Sarah Benton, in her article on the Anti-Apartheid Movement — AAM — (*NS* 4 July), ignores the realities and priorities of the struggle against the Pretoria regime both here and in Southern Africa.

That people associated with the City AA Group should express 'hostility' to the ANC and support the Pan-African Congress for being 'all Black' cannot impress anyone at all familiar with the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. In the early 1970s, the Unita puppet group in Angola also claimed ethnic purity and attacked the MPLA for mobilising in its ranks all Angolans regardless of racial, regional or other differences. This gained a fleeting support for Unita in some Afro-American circles, to the extent that Roy Innes' Congress for Racial Equality was recruiting Afro-American mercenaries to fight with Unita at a time when that group were serving as porters for the South African Defence Force in its invasion of Angola.

There is indeed no contradiction between Unita's proclaimed Black purity and the white supremacy upheld by the Pretoria regime whose surrogate force it has long been. Both base themselves on racial separatism and both hold that people's skin colour is the most important thing about them. It would be unthinkable for the AAM to use the same criterion.

Here, as in Southern Africa, the task is to unite the largest possible number of people to oppose the obscenity of apartheid, which is costing thousands of lives, not only in South Africa but throughout the region. This cannot be achieved if we use the same divisive classifications of people as the apartheid enemy does.

Herbart Ruitenberg, Support Democratic Forces, The Hague, Netherlands

Sarah Benton writes from the viewpoint of the multiracial South African ANC/Mandela current. The non-racial Black Azanian PAC/Mothopeng current seems to be pretty effectively suppressed, in white Britain, and in white South Africa, if one believes the reporters from that place.

Why do we always see names like Allister Sparks, Michael Hornsby, Phillip van Niekerk reporting about Blacks? And never names like Joe Thloloe, Jon Quelane, Thami Mazwai (*The Sowetan, The Star of 'Johannesburg'*)? Are white reporters really superior? They prefer not to mention the second current, forgetting who organised Sharpeville 1960 and Soweto 1976.

Sarah Benton in London: 'the all-Black Pan African Congress attracts more support in the Black community here because of its emphasis on Black autonomy.' Not so. The 'outlawed' Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania together with the 'legal' Azanian People's Organisation represent the radical socialist Africanist current, which is not about 'Black autonomy' and 'anti-apartheid' but about national independence of Azania, about liberation from a colonial system that was foisted upon them by the British in 1910.

This current, therefore, is not popular with S. African whites, however 'progressive'. It is they who pressured the Kliptown Charter upon the ANC, back in 1955, saying 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white'. If the owner of a stolen car gets out of the boot in which he was locked up and demands the car back, can the thief say 'this car belongs to both of us'? Why then would Azanian Blacks have to be condemned as racist when they want their country back?

NZ — lamb to the slaughter

June Gregg, Timaru, South Island, New Zealand

Recent developments suggest that the United States is seeking to meddle in New Zealand affairs and subvert our nuclear free policies.

In March, the United States Information Agency was instructed by the President's National Security Council to lead an American public relations campaign against our anti-nuclear-ships policy. The Agency pays for trips to America by NZ journalists, politicians and others under a visitor programme and in 1986-87 will give 46 grants. Complementing this strategy is the recent opening of a US Information Agency in Christchurch, which is described by the US as 'an important political and intellectual centre where the US government's Antartic research effort, Operation Deep Freeze, is based.' (*Christchurch Press*, 22 June, p4).

A US funding programme for 'democratic development in the Pacific' has been proposed under a scheme that has direct links to the New Zealand National Party. This scheme will give money to 'appropriate' political parties throughout the Pacific as a means of promoting 'democratic' institutions. (*Wellington Evening Post*, 5 June, p8). Other US Pacific schemes have involved efforts to turn Trade Unions against nuclear free zones (*New Zealand Times*, 25 May, p2).

Taken individually, each of these developments may appear fairly innocent. However, occurring together now, just as New Zealand's Nuclear Free Legislation is under consideration, in combination with implicit trade threats — and following visits by pro-nuclear advocates — they suggest that a concerted effort is being made to interfere with our nuclear free policies. Such programmes, backed by the considerable resources of the United States, are overt and freely reported, but the question is inevitably raised what more covert activities may be going on.

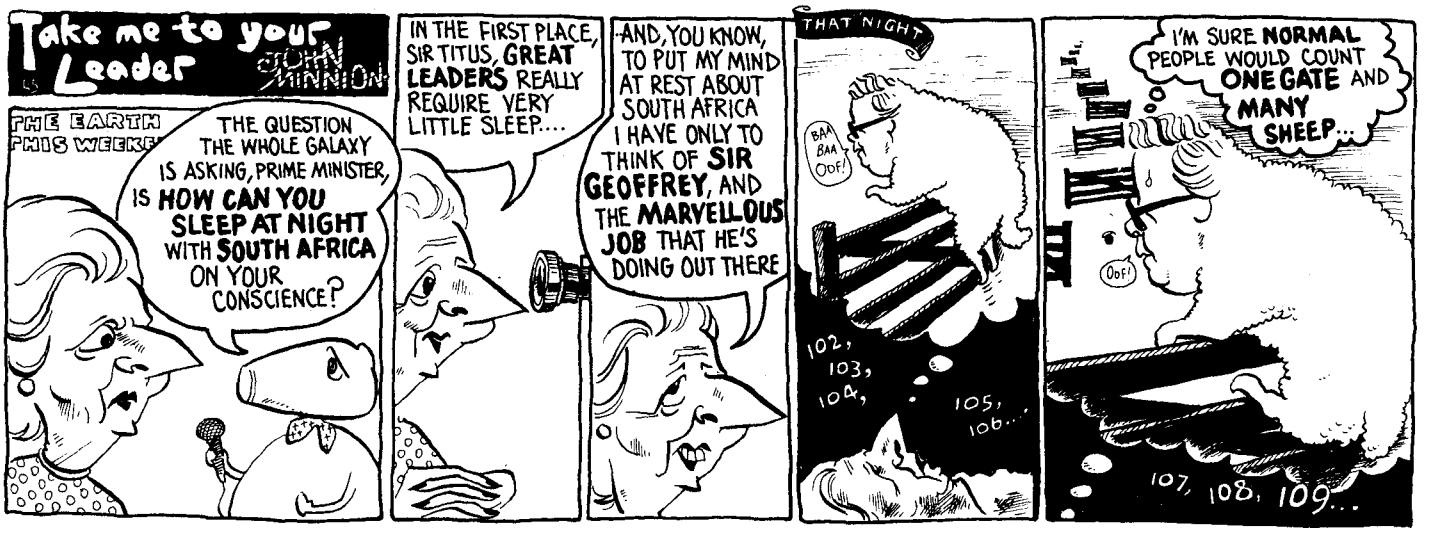
9½ weeks still showing

Frank Gray, Brighton

Paul Miles's appalling description of the film *9½ weeks* (*NS* 11 July) as a 'woman's fantasy of rape' and his absurd notion that all the 'educated' will soon consider the misrepresentation of women as 'boring' reveals a wilful disregard for the present state of sexual and cultural politics. His reactionary position is further enriched by his inappropriate and ridiculous attempt to link Brighton Council's action with Stalinism and Reaganism.

9½ weeks was not banned. Brighton Council changed its classification from 18 to 18R. This removed it from the ABC but has now allowed one of the local cinema clubs to give it a four-week run. This is being done in the name of public service ('the authoritarian council doesn't want you to see this but we'll let you!') but the hope must be to make cash.

The abhorrent sexism (and racism) which exists today won't just wither away as Miles would have us believe. Brighton Labour Party has demonstrated how a local authority can work to support local groups committed to the struggle against all forms of oppression by publicly announcing its disapproval of films like *9½ weeks*. This of course attracts publicity but this is healthy for it encourages an open debate about the nature of and the need for socialist values. I am angered by the *NS* decision to publish an attack on this 'symbolic' act of re-classification. Why does the *NS* want to defend *9½ weeks*?


Take me to your Leader
JOHN MINNION
THE EARTH THIS WEEK
THE QUESTION THE WHOLE GALAXY IS ASKING, PRIME MINISTER, IS HOW CAN YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT WITH SOUTH AFRICA ON YOUR CONSCIENCE?
IN THE FIRST PLACE, SIR TITUS, GREAT LEADERS REALLY REQUIRE VERY LITTLE SLEEP....
AND, YOU KNOW, TO PUT MY MIND AT REST ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA I HAVE ONLY TO THINK OF SIR GEOFFREY, AND THE MARVELLOUS JOB THAT HE'S DOING OUT THERE
THAT NIGHT
BAA BAA OOF!
102, 103, 104,
105, 106...
I'M SURE NORMAL PEOPLE WOULD COUNT ONE GATE AND MANY SHEEP...
OOF!
107, 108, 109...

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Rex Features

The WLM class of '71: when will we meet again (at Ruskin?)

BROKEN AGENDA

Haunted by a sense of 'unfinished discussion' ROSALIND DELMAR asks where the Women's Liberation Movement's 'grand design of appealing to all women' fell away — not from nostalgia, for 'nothing in politics is more suspect', but because the passing of the collective enterprise seems to make it impossible to carry further forward the questions left unsolved.

There must be many who, like me, are somewhere aware that it is approaching twenty years since they first began to ask the questions, have the conversations, feel the need to 'do something' which gave an impetus to what became known as the Women's Liberation Movement, but who are also no longer involved in it. Often, in me at least, this recognition invokes anxiety and regret, a guilty sense of something that went wrong and remained unfinished.

These feelings do not register a weariness with the issues and questions raised for me by women's politics. They represent more the bewilderment of someone who felt that, along with others, she was at the start of something which would be able to form an organised movement and stay that way, but found that the expected movement failed to emerge. Not only did we fail to invent a coherent politics, but my experience in the movement led away from very much trust or confidence in politics as such.

Whilst I began my life in the movement with a practice and language imbued with

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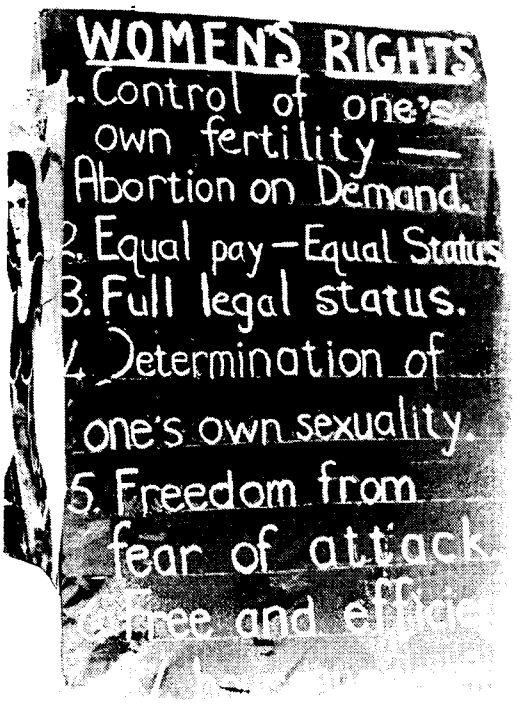
collectivism, I developed through the movement a commitment to my own individual choices: as if treading a pathway from socialism to liberalism (to employ what now seems an out-dated vocabulary). That the women's liberation movement enabled many women to make and stick by their own choices is beyond dispute. What surprises me about myself is that this result casts a shadow over the collective moment.

Perhaps the shadow is cast by the enormity of the original enterprise I felt involved in: that of retrieving and reconstructing an identity between women. I think that this ideal was shipwrecked on the reef of differences between women. All that seems to remain after the break-up is a cluster of rumps or tendencies, divorced from each other except for a little in-fighting, often only united as clients of women's committees dependent on local Labour parties. The grand design of appealing to all women has fallen away, even if the rhetoric remains.

It may be that perception of the fragmentation, disappearance even, of the women's liberation movement has been obscured by the coincidental rise of the 'feminism' which has taken its place. After all, it is true that there is still a women's movement. Its cultural influence is widespread, and its political and social effects continue. The transformation in the approach to victims of rape, for example, or the buoyant market for feminist publishing, or the numbers of times in everyday life sexual stereotyping is questioned, are all symptoms of the impact this oft-derided movement and its members have made and go on making.

'I still remember the last women's liberation conference I went to . . . and at it . . . was endorsed: Women's right to define their own sexuality. It was a demand that had no meaning for me.'


WOMEN'S RIGHTS
1. Control of one's own fertility — Abortion on Demand
2. Equal pay — Equal Status
3. Full legal status.
4. Determination of one's own sexuality.
5. Freedom from fear of attack

Rex Features

But a change has occurred. All forms of political organising or cultural production by women now tends to be called 'feminism' — indeed the term can be applied to something as loose as 'nothing standing in the way of a woman doing what she wants to do': the rights of the unrestrained female ego. In the late sixties and early seventies women's organising was not, in general, called 'feminism'. Feminism was a position adopted by or ascribed to particular groups, a site of argument and (to invoke the 1960s) contestation. Its current easy usage makes me uneasy, even if only because I suspect that if a term can mean anything, it probably also means nothing.

Paradoxically the crisis of the women's liberation movement was, I think, provoked by its success. I remember very clearly the moment at which I first felt the 'women's liberation movement' to be a redundant term. It was at Hastings, at the Women's TUC of 1975, at which delegates voted for free abortion and contraception on demand, against the advice of their executive, in a decisive change of TUC policy. To claim after this that the small groups which met annually in conference *as* the women's liberation movement *was* the women's liberation movement seemed impossible. The movement was larger, more diffuse, and the political arena correspondingly wider. It was a moment of historic conjuncture, a confluence of different organisational streams.

The wreckage of an ideal does not seem to me altogether a bad thing. The attempt to present and represent an homogenous 'womanhood' is as criticizable as homogenised notions of the 'working class'. What disconcerts, though, is the absence of discussion (except in terms of praise and blame) of the fortunes of the WLM. It feels as if the movement has been halted, and the greater part of its participation dispersed, and that except at an individual level or from the moralistic perspective of '*groupuscules*' this has hardly been noticed.

It seems especially significant that the one original political instrument forged by the movement, the consciousness-raising group, should have been generally abandoned. The consciousness-raising group provided a unique space in which to explore the interface between the 'personal' and the 'political'. Because connections were made between politics and personal life, political analysis became filled with personal content, like the writing of a collective autobiography.

The practice of the consciousness-raising group was not an easy one, and not all the groups in the women's liberation movement adopted it. Consciousness-raising challenged those political practices which insist on a divorce, by affirming a lack of connection, between who you are, how you live, and what you hope for from the future. And it questioned the primacy of 'doing things', the contempt for 'talking shops', typical of British social democracy whether of the left or right.

Nowadays the problems once brought to the consciousness-raising groups are often taken to therapists and analysts; otherwise they go where they went before, to friendship networks, or are lived through silently. I am not one of those who finds the shift to therapy a negative phenomenon; in fact, to the extent that it has helped subvert any easy assumption of female identity as a basis for political action, I find it politically positive. The problem is that consciousness-raising was precisely *not* a therapy, and therefore cannot be replaced by it. Tacit abandonment of the characteristic practice of the movement looks like a signal for the abandonment of the movement itself.

A question, that of sexual relations, thought to be dead and buried as far as politics was concerned, was demonstrably alive. But it was not only that women's liberation revived this eternal riddle in the political arena. It also revived other approaches, other political forms, forces created by the pressures of past achievements and compromises in relation to women's politics. Women's politics, in the late 1960s, did not enter the stage with no prehistory: it emerged into a social order already marked by an assimilation of other forms of women's politics, by other feminisms. The unfinished business of past campaigns waited in the wings and re-made its entrance.

Women's liberation was overtaken by its own success. From being 'the movement' it became just a part of it. It is difficult to resent this, but important to note some of the consequences. Different feminisms now coexist, in a state of fusion and confusion, resisting attempts to organise them around rigorous political lines, or to establish hegemonic ideologies within them. It is important to recognise the vitality which this resistance represents. Yet regrets remain. Are they simply regrets for the radical agenda which failed to seize the middle ground? Not entirely.

I also still remember the last women's liberation conference I went to. It was held in Edinburgh, and at it the 'sexuality' demand was endorsed: women's right to define their own sexuality. It was a demand which had no meaning for me. My own sexuality seemed a mysterious part of existence, needing shared thought and analysis rather than voluntaristic, self definition. And a part of existence simply

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not amenable to voluntaristic self-definition. The adoption of a general demand of which I couldn't make sense signified for me the breakdown of the general politics of the movement. Women's Liberation had taught me the importance of participation, of creating slogans and demands which could have a meaning to all involved, and the emptiness of the 'line'. The insistence on the power of the majority vote went against all this. I still carry from my experience in the movement a deep resistance to the tyranny of majoritarianism.

The style of the debate signified breakdown too, expressing as it did the bouts of hysteria to which women's liberation conferences had become prone. Women howling down other women on the basis of their sexual choices. It seemed at the time the ultimate paradox: the women's movement, founded on the terrain of male/female relationships, was floundering in the quicksands of relations between women. Perhaps, after all, it was women rather than men who were the problem for other women. After this my political practice in relation to feminism developed into that of an individual rather than a member of a group, just as my experience of the puzzle of sexual discrimination and sexual difference before the women's liberation movement had been that of an individual.

Yet these outbursts marked areas of difficulty, unfinished debates. For example Edinburgh seemed at the time to mark the triumph of political lesbianism: Lesbianism and political choice rather than emotional need. More recently I have begun to wonder if the problem was not so much political lesbianism 'taking over' as a manifestation of an unconscious homophobia, a sense of suffocation which many women (not all) experienced within a woman-only culture. And whether the political language of the emotions which was used, with its emphasis on reason and good will was adequate to the depth of feeling that was unleashed. Unfinished debates like this haunt me, because they contain important questions which I cannot believe will be worked out in other contexts.

To compensate for the regrets I have a fantasy, well-elaborated by now: it's 1990, and those who participated in the first years of the women's movement meet again at Ruskin. They take as their theme the various experiences they had in the movement: the history of groups in a particular town or city; the entry of homosexuality into the feminist arena and the terms of the commingling of lesbianism and feminism; explanations of current political choices (the turn to the Labour Party, for example); the history and politics of feminist publishing, magazines and books.

Everyone could write their own agenda for such a conference. It is a fantasy of completion and reconciliation; there will be at last be communication, feminism without the aggro; it is a fantasy of leaving nicely. It also contains a strong injection of nostalgia, as if by re-living something one could make it better. Yet nothing in politics is more suspect than nostalgia.

The Women's Liberation Movement is no longer there to be returned to: that is why I write about a fantasy rather than trying to organise a conference. But its unfinished discussions are there: discussions about separatism, homosexuality and homophobia; political representation and participation; the ambivalent polarities of feminism and socialism and the difficulties and possibilities of their attempted combination. It may be that without the political movement these discussions cannot be had, but it will be a pity if instead of being aired and shared they remain subterranean, part of a private experience, marginalised as such by women who once challenged established divisions between public and private. □

Rosalind Delmar is a writer and translator. Some of these thoughts are developed at greater length in her contribution to What is Feminism?, *ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, forthcoming Basil Blackwell, Autumn 1986.*

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FASHION

Velvet underground

Jules Lubbock

Post-modern, certainly; post-industrial, perhaps. But post-suit and tie? Are men discovering the pleasure principle?

THE MOST VOLUPTUOUS and potentially most threateningly addictive experience of my life was . . . the feel of silk velvet between my fingers. It wasn't the temptation to spend more on clothes than ever before but to consume fruit forbidden by every rule of my white, heterosexual, male upbringing.

Late last Saturday afternoon after a pleasurable swing through the summer sales in South Molton Street I saw dangling before my eyes a Jasper Conran emerald green jacket in silk velvet. No other velvet jacket in my past prepared me for the experience of trying it on. Other velvets, though soft, remain firm to the touch, but silk velvet slithers through one's fingers. Other jackets are stiffened and tailored, but this one was designed not to *fit* like a jacket but to hang like a dress so that the fabric swirls around and caresses one's body.

The price of £200 (reduced from £450) put it beyond reach. Then, hearing the 'Aah' that escaped my lips, and catching my expression change in rapid succession from surprise to pleasure to delight as I draped myself luxuriantly in the garment and made sinuous half turns in the mirror, there appeared before me the face of a salesman who 'thought he could make me an offer.' First £150, then the trousers as well for £200; I escaped to the hint of a 'final' offer.

The threat lay not in the expense. I would happily spend that money on furniture or books, things solid and permanent and 'needed'. It was the appeal of that garment to repressed sensualities and theatricalities. Men are (or certainly they were) brought up to the view that fashionable clothes are literally superficial, trivial, women's things and like women pretty and empty. Such attitudes originated in 'The Great Masculine Renunciation' of the early nineteenth century codified by Beau Brummell, the king of the dandies, in the dark, clean, and above all well-cut and closely tailored suit, white shirt and tie. Since then the fundamental principle of Western clothing has been the contrast between the rapid fluctuations of women's fashion and the constancy of the male suit and its more informal variations, its very purpose being to set professional, business-like man apart from all deviants — savages, peasants, aristocrats, the poor, women and children. In contrast to their nakedness, gawdiness or physical accessibility he has been buttoned from top to toe like a well-wrapped parcel.

Working clothes for a world without work, from Ravensbourne's student fashion show. Designed by Debbie Lloyd (left) and Kevin Gentle (right).

His is a regimen as severe as any monastic rule: professional man must renounce the pleasures of this world to dedicate himself to the ever-increasing wealth and power of his society; he must sacrifice his sensuality for our material salvation. Draped velvets that make him purr with pleasure are hardly the stuff of renunciation.

At issue are not mere appearances but behaviour itself. Clothing does far more than signify, it alters behaviour, it acts, enacts and interacts with us — to a degree it *is* us. Near the beginning of the present sartorial era Carlyle wrote, 'Society is founded upon Cloth.' Bold — but not bold enough. Clothes distinguish the human species from all others; toolmaking, language, shelter we have in common but *homo sapiens* branched off the evolutionary tree on the fateful day that our first anthropoid ancestor adorned him or herself in dress. The Genesis legend is spot on.

Clothing, then, rather than architecture must be the mother of the arts. Yet how many weighty monographs are there on Beau Brummell, Poiret or Coco Chanel compared with those on the great architects and painters of their times? If clothes are so fundamental why aren't they treated with due honour. The answer lies in their power. 'Thy tailor . . . made those clothes which, as it seems, make thee,' observes a character in *Cymbeline*. If we put ourselves on with our clothes then the lie is given to all those cherished notions of our naturalness. Particularly in this era of the suit, credited as being more natural because less ornamental, the factor of gender comes into play: men are natural, but women are as artificial as the fashions they put on.

If, as I believe, a new era of clothes is dawning, one as momentous as that of the suit — that straitjacket and guarantee of Gradgrindery, of painstaking managerial and manufacturing skills and the very epitome of modernism — then it must reveal itself in men's rather than in women's clothing. But the evidence from this year's London student fashion shows is equivocal. Few students design menswear, and there has been a wary retreat from the extravagances of the recent past. Styles ranged from Debbie Lloyd's 'dude' look with ferocious steel shin pads, shoe caps and chains flying from holster-belts at Ravensbourne College, to any number of variations upon the ground-length, unbelted and voluminous overcoat. All safely butch on the face of it, but these coats, evocative of Byron and Bogart, are the nearest thing to 'dressing up' that a man can wear, and with their abundance of material hanging freely from the shoulders they encourage a new style of walking: the models saunter and swagger in order to display the material in flamboyant movement, quite at odds with the disciplined march demanded by the suit.

If a revolution in the long cycle of fashion is really taking place then this season's 'retreat from clowntime' should come as no surprise. So much of life has been repressed by tailoring that even the trendiest males will hesitate and recoil occasionally. Major fashion changes cannot be made to happen by designers. But sometime before the end of this millenium it will look as ridiculous for men to wear tailored clothes as it became for them to wear powdered periwigs, embroidered jackets and lace cuffs at the end of the eighteenth century. And the demise of the suit will mark the end of the ascendancy of Public Man. □

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MUSIC

Needle match 1

Jon Savage

AS THE TITLE SUGGESTS, Alex Cox's film *Sid and Nancy* concentrates on the principal characters to the point of monomania, the two fusing into one horrible hydra of emotional and chemical addiction. In its final stages, where the claustrophobia of self-obsession and interdependence is translated, spatially, into an airless hotel room, the film contains some real emotional truth. The rest tells great whopping lies.

Part of the problem is that Cox can't decide whether he's making an (anti-) love story or a genre pop film. Because both Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen were involved with the Sex Pistols, Cox feels it incumbent upon himself to deliver a snap history of Punk Rock — spiced with a bit of subcultural theory — as seen through the eyes of Sid. The problem is, Sid's wearing sunglasses after dark, and Cox's own vision is similarly obscured by the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia. The result is a fundamental mistake which reveals the poverty of Cox's fantasy.

It is, of course, extremely difficult to recreate the still living past, and, in this case, a past so well covered up as Punk Rock. Punk's Tenth Anniversary is turning into one of the media events of the year, and, as is usual on these occasions, almost everything is covered except an accurate attempt at describing what went on. The framing of *Sid and Nancy* as a revival item, coupled with the inevitable publicity that a film like this heralds, only contributes to the misconceptions and misrepresentations.

The initial media codification of a sophisticated, art-school style into 'foul-mouthed' yobbery is swallowed wholesale by Cox. The foul mouth is made manifest: the first time we see 'Johnny Rotten', he is dribbling an unholy mixture of baked beans and champagne. The camera closes in. Such literalness — depressing in a director whose 'radicalism' is part of the package — is carried through to the script.

Here all the characters are presented as ciphers, revolving around Sid as his satellites: their sole purpose is to prop up the two main protagonists. Apart from being a waste of the dramatic possibilities that arise from the most superficial reading of the characters of John Lydon and Malcolm McLaren (to name but two), it is inaccurate: until the last American tour, Sid was himself but a cipher in the Sex Pistols.

Such nit-picking wouldn't be important if the film was a consistent, abstracted fantasy. Unfortunately, Cox gets just enough period details, incidents and locations right to give it more than a whiff of documentary. He claims otherwise, but these claims aren't backed up by the direction which, apart from a few good belly laughs, is quite pedestrian in this part. Having decided to recreate several well-documented incidents, he lays himself open to a different kind of scrutiny, that of authenticity; he fails so resoundingly that it calls even the film's successes into question.

Cox's vision of Punk Rock — a tiny element in reality — is of a boy's Rock Rebel fantasy. It's quite American in this respect — particularly in its crudity — which may give a clue to the film's commercial orientation. If that is the case, then even the emotional charge of Sid's disintegration is, like the Government (anti-) heroin adverts, double-edged: you just wonder whether Sid Vicious isn't being presented as the latest example of the romantic myth — 'Live Fast, Die Young and Have A Good Looking Corpse' — that, in the person of James Dean, has been at the heart of youth culture.

Punk was an attempt to force open the window of an airless culture: any pursuant claustrophobia was as much temporal as anything else, there simply not being enough time. Time has now stretched: Punk is consigned to the eternity of the museum, where people squabble over the exhibits. And *Sid and Nancy* is so hermetically sealed from the outside world that it makes you wonder whether opening the window is even possible. □

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CINEMA

Needle match 2

Adam Mars-Jones

IN HIS NEW FILM *Sid and Nancy* Alex Cox has set out to find a love story where not many people would be able to detect one, in the relationship between Simon Ritchie (better known as Sid Vicious) and Nancy Spungen, whom he stabbed to death in the Chelsea Hotel, New York, in 1978. Cox wanted his film to 'romanticise' its subjects without 'glorifying' them, and he had one real advantage over the makers of most romantic films. Usually an audience is given pretty people, photogenic landscapes and air-brushed emotions, so that any involvement is likely to be the equivalent of sinking back into a plump cushion of celluloid. An audience of *Sid and Nancy* will want to take any chance it's offered to believe in a sustained emotion — anything to counterbalance the desperate squalor everywhere on display.

Alex Cox's screenplay (written with Abbe Wool) succeeds in locating a sort of innocence in Sid Vicious. Before he met Nancy he had no experience in heroin, though of course he pretended to her that he was an adept. The screenplay strongly suggests - the film itself less strongly — that he was a virtual virgin, aping Johnny Rotten's contempt for sex out of sheer fear. Sid Vicious, according to Cox and Wool, and despite his massive and matched appetites for destruction and self-destruction, retained a childish need to be liked.

Nancy is a harder character to recruit as a heroine of romance. Her first compliment to Sid in the film is 'Good veins', meaning easily found and easily punctured. Her violent emotions come across as purely psychotic, rather than overcompensatory like Sid's. Her nearest approach to vulnerability is hysteria. Even when she tries to help her lover off the drugs to which she has addicted him, her motive is a sort of crazed ambition rather than anything more realistic. Her Sid must get straight just long enough to claim the super-stardom he is owed.

Nevertheless, the screenplay contrives a number of scenes for the pair of them which manage to be funny and unpredictable. The strange thing is that these scenes tend to be botched or omitted in the final film. There's nothing new about a screenwriter and director being at odds, but it's a little eccentric when they're the same person.

It's partly a question of persona. A book can pass itself off as a maverick project more easily than a film. So the screenplay of *Sid and Nancy* is published by Faber in an artfully shoddy format, with the mandatory punk belligerence and cut-up newspaper headlines.

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Connoisseurs may be reminded of the punk pages of the 1977 *Eton College Chronicle*, its bodged type and safety-pinned scrawlings printed on the same lavish stock as the rest of the magazine and set up by the same compositor (I imagine him weeping).

Unfortunately there is no equivalent in film to the three-chord punk thrash. Heroic tattiness over any length is simply wearing. Cox the screenwriter may sneeringly specify '*Another one of those piled-up telephoto shots with lots of American stuff in it*', but Cox the director must come up with the goods.

So he does, but in too many styles. Forties' film noir for the opening (Sid arrested at the Chelsea Hotel); seedy glamour for a fantasy video of 'My Way'; bungled situation-comedy when Nancy introduces Sid to her grandparents. One shot, of Sid phoning Nancy from America, in fading light from an outdoor phonebox, filmed from inside a diner, tips its hat unaccountably to Edward Hopper. Much of this effort is wasted. The fantasy dilutes the realism, and the realism rebukes the fantasy. The sequences of Sid performing should have gone — fantasised performances above all — since Sid the performer isn't what the film's about. Then it would have been possible to keep important scenes like Sid destroying Malcolm Maclaren's Kings Road shop, in a relatively unselfish rage at an attempt to lure Nancy away to America without her methadone, or Nancy during their separation urging Sid over the phone to perform sexually with the person he's with — 'Pretend she's you and you're me.'

In scenes like these the *amour fou* comes over hot and strong. The only survival in the finished film is an early scene, where Nancy says, 'Kiss my toes.' Sid takes off her boot and rips open her fishnet stockings to do so, with a seriousness that Bunuel would have admired. That scene at least is lingered on, while others with considerable potential — Sid and Nancy at Sid's mother's house, for instance — are rushed through, the dialogue hard to hear.

Gary Oldman and Chloe Webb in the title roles give it all they've got. Cox claims that the death scene was improvised by the actors rather than written by him and Wool. It's certainly convincing: Sid and Nancy have a suicide pact that Sid is opting out of. They fight, and Nancy contrives to get herself stabbed.

The trouble is that they have been so drugged for so long that they seem like two people who happen to be dissolving in the same room rather than a couple of any sort. Heroin takes the world away. A little earlier, Nancy has fallen over after fixing up. Sid looks at her, then turns back to the hole in his arm. There comes a time when you have to admit that opiate catatonia is not a lot like the swoon of passionate surrender; and Alex Cox's film, for all its intermittent bravery, can only go so far before it's brought up short by the facts. □

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THEATRE

Holy terror

Benedict Nightingale

The Danton Affair
PAM GEMS *Barbican*
The Dead Monkey
NICK DARKE *Pit*

WELL, IT'S NOT exactly *Springtime for Hitler, Summer for Stalin* or *Fall for Genghis Khan*, but there were times when Pam Gems's reworking of the Polish dramatist Stanislawa Przybyszewska's reslanting of Büchner's *Danton's Death* seemed to me not a million miles from such historical revisionism. Robespierre isn't someone who stands very high in my personal pantheon, nor is the most ebullient of his fellow-revolutionaries and the greatest of his victims someone who stands very low. Most people, I imagine, would feel much the same. But not Przybyszewska, not Gems, not the play now titled **The Danton Affair.**

Its Danton isn't just a fleshly, loutish megalomaniac: he's a hypocrite, too, harbouring (as he does) sly anti-democratic views and despotic ambitions beneath his man-of-the-people front. Our first inkling of the fellow's moral ugliness comes from a source one would call unexpected, were not Pam Gems also the author of *Queen Christina, Piaf* and *Camille*, three plays of markedly if moderately feminist tenor and thrust. He grabs at his child-wife, slobbers over her, practically ravishes her onstage; and her distaste is clear to be seen. Indeed, she tells us that 'you bought me like a dog, you raped me . . . do you think any woman would go with you from choice?' How can a man profess egalitarianism when his bedfellow is an adolescent serf?

He can't, and by the end he doesn't. It's increasingly evident that his challenge to Robespierrean severity is not principled, but personally motivated; and that his politics are the kind we'd nowadays call fascist. 'History,' he opines, 'is created by the individual, not the mass.' 'I know, I feel, I *am* the revolution,' he adds. The people are 'a rabble', 'stinking rubbish'.

He persistently talks of himself in the third person, as a sort of semi-divine institution, 'Danton'. 'You would be our dictator,' suggests Philippeaux, one of many who come to rue the day they were caught in his force-field, seduced by his treacherous charisma. 'I have the capacity,' agrees Danton. The way he talks and the way Brian Cox plays him, with swaggering truculence and bully-boy bravado, one is often put in mind of a more recent demagogue, Mussolini. Certainly, such a comparison is encouraged by the play's next-to-last line: 'the future belongs to the late Danton.'

Meanwhile, Ian McDiarmid's Robespierre stalks about the vast Barbican stage, emanating reason, wisdom, decency, consideration for his friends, and revolutionary integrity tempered by a willingness to compromise for the revolution's long-term sake. He it is who sees, with a clarity denied to all else, that the destruction of the mad dog Danton will undo all the Jacobins' good, selfless work for the people. It will push the political centre towards counter-revolution, resulting in the deadliest of circles: government terror, more conspiracies, more terror, more conspiracies still.

All that can be done to avoid this, the Sea-Green Incorruptible is ready to do, down to humiliating himself in front of Danton. But the man himself is so blatantly, so obscenely, perhaps so infectiously corrupt that he changes his mind. Hence a trial, a judgement, an execution that Robespierre knows very well will eventually cause his own death, too.

McDiarmid and Gems do, it's true, try to

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add a little grey to the character's glistening whites. He brings a snarl, growl and rasp to his more climactic parliamentary performances, suggesting there's a bit of the angry animal inside the utopian rationalist; Gems drops a strongish hint that Danton disgusts Robespierre partly because he prods something power-hungry within himself. But that doesn't finally change the evening's moral balance or, for that matter, add complexity and depth to characterisation that seems thinnish throughout. *The Danton Affair* isn't much more than an opinionated and perverse chronicle-play, rather shrilly performed by Ron Daniel's cast, and not written with the freshness and verve the subject requires. 'The chief of police has been arrested,' characteristically cries a stricken Jacobin, to which another characteristically ripostes, 'Without him we lose control of Paris.' 'Oh, Camille, always the melodrama,' chides Robespierre, prompting Desmoulins to reply, 'You are a great man, Maxim, but you have a hollow heart.' Pan Gems can and should be less plodding than that.

I'm the last person who should be making smart remarks about others' names, but I can't resist pointing out how aptly the author of **The Dead Monkey** was christened. He writes darke comedies, with somewhat darke intentions, never more so than this time. We begin with Anthony O'Donnell's trudging, apologetic vet informing Frances Barber's Californian housewife that, yes, her husband's beloved monkey is dead. Then she breaks this news to the owner, a sweaty salesman played by Bruce Alexander, and the two of them decide it would be nice as well as cheap to eat the decaying simian for supper. Then the proceedings darken, in every sense. It appears that Barber, feeling that her husband is no longer the surf-riding hulk she married, has been earning pin-money from the local voyeurs by copulating with the monkey, and the creature actually expired in flagrante. This does not vastly appeal to Alexander. Indeed, it's not long before he's kicked Barber to death, and she's on the kitchen table in much the same position as the monkey, being glumly inspected by the selfsame vet.

If the RSC wanted to stage a study of Californian confusion, rootlessness, inadequacy, ennui and violence, it would have done better to acquire the rights to David Rabe's *Hurlyburly*, a play whose showing here is long overdue. Darke has his quirkily entertaining moments, as does his cast; but he can't avoid the accusation that he's writing pretty condescendingly about pretty stereotyped American grotesques. Altogether, the RSC has had better weeks, in each of its auditoria. □

Feel Something Drawing Me On The Other Side
SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK *Making Waves Spin* 124 & 123

Everyone says that the acapella singing of these six Black women from Washington DC is amazing. Everyone is right. The shimmering, rumbling mountain of sound that they produce is like nothing else in contemporary music.

Their vast, vibrant voices are put at the service both of God and the Left: the first of these records features mainly religious music, the second political material, but there is considerable overlap. Both records are terrific.

The Other Side in particular has some glorious things on it. 'Deportees' is lent the potency of a secular spiritual, as the Woody Guthrie song is embroidered and enlarged while leaving its moral exposed. And the poetry of group leader, Bernice Johnson Reagon, is blazingly simple: 'Who cries with me when I lose my baby/By accident, by choice against my will/Who knows that I'm a childless mother?/ Woman hold my hand/Woman hold my hand.' Simple? In the hands of Sweet Honey it becomes as fierce and proud a statement of Black womanhood as I have ever heard, Holliday and Smith included.

Back to the Centre
PAUL BRADY *Mercury* 86

Paul Brady had early success with the Johnsons singing pop-influenced folk. He then immersed himself in the traditional music of his native Ireland to emerge as one of the most gifted guitarists and singers around, recording with Planxty and producing some outstanding rock-tinged folk music. Then, about ten years ago, he decided he wanted to become a rock star and it was all change again; singing his own serviceable but undistinguished rock ballads, Brady cut back on the traditional material, leaving room on gigs for only a token song or two.

Back to the Centre finds Brady back in the middle of the road, applying his fine Van Morrisonish voice and nifty guitar technique to drippy love songs that don't deserve them. His reflection on the way things are back home, 'The Island', however, is beautiful, the desire for tranquil love on an island symbolising unpretentiously the ache for a wider peace. And 'The Homes of Donegal' (to the tune of 'Tramps and Hawkers'), given the Cal treatment (Brady played whistle on the soundrack of the movie), is agreeably sentimental. Otherwise, an average rock album from a brilliant folk musician.

Donny O'Rourke

TELEVISION

Soft machines

Peter Hillmore

I WONDER WHAT **The Rock and Roll Years** (BBC2) will choose to show when it gets round to the events of 1986? On the music front, there'll probably be clips of singers like Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney. On the political side, there'll certainly be film of Ronald Reagan advocating the bombing of America's enemies; there's bound to be something on a crisis in Southern Africa and the compilers can hardly ignore the World Cup.

And we'll have the distinct feeling we've seen it all before, which we have — on last Monday's episode, in fact, when *The Rock and Roll Years* went back two decades and looked at 1966. There was a vigorous Ronald Reagan, celebrating his election as Governor of California by talking — apparently without the use of prompt cards in those days — about the need to increase the bombing of North Vietnam. There was Harold Wilson still trying to solve the problems of Rhodesia and arguing that sanctions were effective. There was Mick Jagger dancing in the streets to the tune of '19th Nervous Breakdown'. *Plus ça change.*

Twenty years ago, however, we were in love with technology, in the middle of Mr Harold Wilson's white hot heat. The old clips of space walks and extraterrestrial dogs were positively euphoric. Twenty years on, thankfully, we've become a little less ecstatic about technology's purities. ITV's **The Real World** last week was about 'The most important program in the World', referring to the computer programmes and software that will control President Reagan's Star Wars technology, allowing him to bomb his enemies. Even the late lamented 'Islander' columnist in the *NS* would have had cause to stop thinking computers were wonderful after seeing this show. Experts pointed out that software always contains bugs and that the only way of solving and erasing them is when the system is operating — but the Star Wars stuff will never be fully operational until it is too late to test it. Star Wars' defenders pointed to the wonders of the American telephone system's computers for reassurance, and then a telephone computer expert gave a few examples of how they broke down unexpectedly, causing chaos. The Space Programme was also cited, and then examples were given of how unpredicted and 'impossible' malfunctions had occurred. Don't worry about whose finger is on the button, because the button probably won't work.

It was an interesting programme, but that doesn't mean it was a well-made one. The maker, TVS, doesn't get too many programmes networked, as it is not one of the 'Big Five' group of companies (Thames, Granada, Yorkshire and LWT) who carve up the schedules like Mafia chieftains. It's also rare for ITV to have a current affairs

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programme on the prime time of Sunday night (it's only happening because the *South Bank Show* is off the air for the summer break). TVS was clearly excited by the opportunity, and worried that the viewer might become bored and use the television's own built-in computer to change channels. So it went all out to make things 'interesting' and gimmicky, like the worst of *Tomorrow's World*. The presenters were filmed from above in a strange half-light and there was even an actor dressed like an army general sitting at a make-believe console. When the final credits rolled, a tiny logo revealed that the series is made with the financial help of British Gas. For some reason, a series being made about technology, with money from a business that depends on technology, struck me as worrying.

If you'd used the computer to change channels on Sunday night, you'd certainly think the machine was malfunctioning. If you were bored by **Choices** (BBC1), where Rabbi Julia Neuberger's guests were talking about marriage, you would have switched to ITV and **The Jimmy Young Television Programme** where Mr Young and the studio audience were discussing . . . marriage. Agony aunt Irma Kurtz was billed to be on both programmes, but even a freelance journalist can't be in two places, earning two fees, at once, so she was only on BBC. Jimmy Young's star guest was a Bishop who looked like Alan Bennett and was so desperate to be trendy and traditional at the same time ('Well, yes, I am against couples living together before they're married, but that's my personal view. I don't think the Church should be in the condemnation business') that he seemed to come to from a Bennett sketch as well. Mr Young is the kind of presenter who thinks a lot of brief questions shouted from the audience indicates a lively debate and doesn't mind if one question drags the theme away from the previous topic; consequently his programme's a mess. Rabbi Neuberger wasn't much better. If Mr Young had an Alan Bennett vicar, then Ms Neuberger had a Victoria Wood parody of a feminist ('Well, yes, I am against marriage, but if people want to make that commitment rather than live together, I don't think they should be condemned').

The programme-makers themselves were, in a way, parodies of the television world, choosing participants and audiences who would be both controversial and safe at the same time: basically, there was no original viewpoint expressed; everything had been said before, by the same participants, hence the two invitations to Irma Kurtz. 'Well, yes, I've got absolutely nothing against a controversial programme, if that's what you chaps want, but I do think it must be structured in such a way . . .' □

Among this week's contributors

Naomi Mitchison's own account of the Huxleys appears in the last volume of her autobiography *You May Well Ask*. Her wartime diary, *Among You Taking Notes*, came out last year. Both are published by Gollancz.

Liz Heron's *Changes of Heart: Reflections on Women and Independence* is published by Pandora in September.

Babel

Naseem Khan

WERE THERE A collective noun for community artists, what would it be? Not, chances are, an approving one — like a pride of lions or a charm of goldfinches — for community arts have, from the beginning, stirred as much passion against them as for them, even arousing occasional despair in those who support them in principle. At their best a genuine agent for popular cultural expression, at their worst self-deluding and romantic, community arts would be hard put to compress themselves into a single noun.

Little wonder that even the phrase 'community arts' was muffled at Sheffield recently, where two hundred or so had gathered — under the aegis of the Shelton Trust and its quarterly journal *Another Standard* — to debate the future of the movement. How does its past effect its future? Has it been too in-turning? Are previous articles of faith, such as collective practice, still relevant despite, as one speaker alleged, being 'slightly out of vogue at the moment'? Is community art itself, as some claim, a played-out force?

'Emotional anorexia and a strong smell of nostalgia', said one of the American contributors, put people off community arts. A determined vagueness, said others, a resistance to any self-examination or calls to analyse practice had led to parochial work. 'The old-style community arts,' said Owen Kelly, one of the conference's organisers and author of *Community, Art and the State*, was "profoundly unintellectual': dominated by a strong feeling that one should do it, not talk about it. In Kelly's book (see Work in Progress 11 Jan 1985) he argues that it is this vagueness that has been part of community art's undoing. Events bear him out, for the problem is not that community art no longer exists, but that too many neighbours have moved into its ground. Education's there, happily using community art's own tools, and the social services. You can now take diplomas in Community Arts; you can get MSC money for it. Is this the brave new radical world?

If community art's old home has been institutionalised and taken over, this has at least provoked its practitioners to thoughts of greater coherence in the future. What form this should take has provided the substance of Shelton Trust debates for the past three years. The Sheffield weekend — 'Another Standard '86: Culture and Democracy' — aimed to crystallise past discussions, to present the results of those deliberations to its members (the heartland of the movement) as a printed manifesto (published by Comedia at £1.75) and to create a united force for moving forward. The document argues for the centrality of culture (rather than the arts) in the political agenda and attempts to outline the nature of a wider cultural democracy (as distinct from community arts).

There are two ways of assessing the conference. One can, of course, simply judge its ideas; but almost as important as these is how much success the Shelton Trust (or Another Standard, as its AGM re-named the body) had in putting them over. In a sense, a conference like this, drawing on such a wide constituency, is, despite careful pre-planning, doomed. The attendance was remarkably disparate — from youngsters who'd just started in local authority jobs to old political campaigners. The contrasts between attitudes and experience led to dissatisfaction on both sides. A low standard of debate, said theoreticians dismissively, as they emerged from the unstructured discussion groups. Non-theoreticians, on the other hand, found the manifesto jargonistic, baffling and inaccessible. If you'd gone into the Ladies at the end of Saturday, you'd have found one of the 'Cultural Democracy' stickers stuck to a seat.

Fragmentation followed. Splinter groups splintered; objectors to the format created new lines of thought. By the end of Sunday, 48 different discussion groups were being proposed. Vigour and frustration flourished side by side.

For all that, there was a broad consensus that Another Standard should develop as a more active focus for the field of cultural activism. But, if it responds, it will have to do some hard thinking about communication. There's no doubt that the ideas on the agenda were fertile ones. They came over best in the direct and vivid speeches by the contingent from the Alliance Cultural Democracy of America, a place where, its president Charles Frederick said dryly, 'the words "cultural democracy" are not words on the tips of everyone's tongues'. The thesis is an attractive one: a 'synthesising discourse' between a broad selection of like-minded groups, from avant-garde artists to educationalists; a broad, unsectarian front that will reshape relationships developed through the women's movement, the environmental movement and others. Both Frederick and his colleagues stressed the aridity of the old-style oppositional stance. Like Another Standard, the ACD wants cultural activists to set their own house in order, but, ultimately, the objective is a broad-based cultural Bill of Rights.

This is not the stuff for an old-style agenda. It can't be boiled down into neat resolutions. At the same time, it must be said that it has potentially the same disadvantages as old-style community arts — in its broadness, its openness, its principled lack of finite definition. If Another Standard can transmute that spirit into clear, precise prose, it will more than have played its part.

Next week: Work in Progress goes looking for the Commonwealth Arts Festival.

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Colin Wheeler

Playing fast and safe

Boyd Tonkin

As publishers merge and take each other over at an unprecedented rate, what are the likely effects on authors and readers?

AS YOU MAY HAVE noticed, this week the Windsors staged a Marital Event. On Monday *An Invitation to a Royal Wedding* will hit your local bookshop. Published by Collins, this breathless work will use text and pictures supplied by an independent 'book packager' in a print-run of around 400,000. From aisle to shelf in five days flat: eat your heart out, Marcel Proust.

This little cameo of the book business in a high-tech age has all the ingredients for instant profit in the mid-1980s. A giant firm; a gilt-edged subject; the ultimate 'media tie-in' and a sub-contractor able to cut unit costs: combined, these add up to a fast-moving, glossy product likely to occupy a large slice of retailers' space for not very long.

No part of this mixture is new but, during the past 15 months, the pace of mergers and takeovers among British publishers has accelerated at a rate unprecedented in the industry — and last week's move by Penguin Books and its subsidiary companies into new headquarters off Kensington High Street may be the right moment to take stock of the emerging effects of this concentration. Does the gathering of imprints under a few corporate wings mean duller books: safe titles in predictable formats, leavened by the hectic pursuit of quick-selling blockbusters?

In 1985, sales of British books came close to £2 billion; a 14 per cent rise over 1984. Publishers sold one book abroad for every two in Britain, while the total number of titles issued rose yet again to a record 52,994. A few big-league publishers can now turn over in excess of £100 million (Penguin: £113 million) and expect a trading profit of over £10 million (Penguin: £10.8). 1986 has proved to have a much colder climate, but recent figures suggest an industry whose leading firms have done well out of recession.

It would be nice to believe that ordinary book-buyers have tried to read the Thatcher years away. In fact, much additional income has come from wider profit margins, export earnings, reference and education. In Britain, books still acount for only a third of a penny in each pound of consumer spending. André Deutsch's Tom Rosenthal laments the 'low perceived value' of a book compared with a video or compact disc. And the independent publisher Anthony Blond has no illusions that the hard-faced new rich — the Big Bang generation — will save the traditional hardback trade: 'They are openly philistine in language and manner. They would rather spend their money on almost anything except books.' So, if you want to make a mint in publishing, set up a list which boasts a standard reference work, an essential EFL text, a children's reader, a Catherine Cookson clone and some funnies for Christmas — *101 Uses for a Bankrupt Publisher*, perhaps.

With titles that stretch from the lightning Andy-Fergie tome to Roland Barthes in Flamingo, Collins epitomises the new powers of concentration. Their imprints include Fontana, Grafton, Paladin and Panther. They own one third of Pan and Picador (with Macmillan and Heinemann) and the Hatchards and Claude Gill bookshop chains. In turn, Rupert Murdoch's News International owns more than one third of them.

Collins forms one of eight groups commanding about half of the British market. Apart from Penguin (itself a corner of the Pearson empire), among the others are the academic giant ABP (Methuen, Routledge, Croom Helm), Oxford University Press and the vastly rich family firm of Hodder & Stoughton, flush with cash from the likes of Jeffrey Archer and John Le Carré.

For a handful of truly profitable authors such as these, there's one major benefit from a deal with a conglomerate publisher: in a 'vertically integrated' contract (as the firms have swollen, so has the jargon), the company issues hardback and then paperback editions of a book under different imprints — a Penguin following a Michael Joseph title, say — and, under this arrangement, an author might receive 100 per cent of paperback royalties rather than have to yield 20-40 per cent to an independent hardback publisher. But comparatively few writers fall into this élite category. Your cherished monograph on West Riding Methodism won't make an extra cent from the industry's recent slide towards oligopoly.

For the Society of Authors, general secretary Mark Le Fanu has been watching the past year's combinations 'in a mood of curious apprehension'. Shifts in the paper ownership of firms may mean little but 'the worst part of it is editorial turnover'. With rapid staff mobility in ever-larger groups, 'enormous enthusiasm' about a book from one editor may give way to 'lukewarm acceptance' from the next.

There is some evidence that publishing employees have voted with their feet against the actual or expected impact of conglomeration. Among the new Penguin family (Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Sphere) 40-60 per cent of staff chose redundancy rather than re-locate to Kensington. Large public companies, accountable to institutional shareholders, may feel more pressure to guarantee a safe return each year in each department of their output. This works against the interests of long-term innovation and coherent list-building. It may also squeeze out maverick writers, or subjects which can't fit a convenient pigeonhole, a process which could lead to the silencing of minority viewpoints. For Neil Middleton, now of Pluto Press and formerly of Penguin, it already has: 'Big publishers effectively have no-go areas. It's not that they're politically hostile, but their perception of public interest is governed by market forces. They're not going to do radical books because they think the radical public has disappeared.'

NS readers won't need to be told again of the case histories that point in the opposite

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direction, as film posters for *The Color Purple* loom from every hoarding, but it's worth noting how corporate firms respond to the regular achievements of what you might call *Zeitgeist* publishing by small outfits in tune with authentic changes in taste and outlook. Last Thursday, Heinemann Education (now a tentacle of Paul Hamlyn's Octopus Group) re-launched its African and Caribbean Writers series, once destined for classrooms in Ibadan or Port of Spain. Now these titles — from Nelson Mandela to Bessie Head — enjoy pretty covers, heavy marketing and plenty of shelf space. Without the independents' record of success with Black writing, such a gesture from one of the giants would be unthinkable. Thus small publishers can end up as unpaid research and development agencies for their rich relations.

For everyone, from transnational tower-blocks to the dining-room tables of one-person-operated firms, 1986 will be a rougher ride than the fat years of the early Eighties. Too many new issues (perhaps 60,000 this year); too little new custom; insecure bookshops that rely more and more on a handful of massively-hyped lead titles. Neil Middleton thinks that these constraints will force 'a certain number of publishers to go out of business'.

Anthony Blond, who first made an indifferent world sit up and notice Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, believes that 'lone guerrillas' may survive as well as the conglomerate 'big battalions' — 'quick-footed, beady-eyed little rodents' aided by new technology and an intimate knowledge of their readers' needs. And medium-sized companies blessed with an unfair share of talent will find a way through the current trough, though even the gifted federation of Chatto, Virago, Bodley Head and Cape has suffered, with some job losses at Bodley Head.

But, for mainstream publishing distinguished neither by scale nor sparkle nor speciality, the landscape looks bleak. In a crueller world ruled by corporate thinking, says Anthony Blond, 'Excellence will out. But not just goodness. In the old days, you could be sure that a good book would sell, but no longer.' □

Feminist voices in counterpoint

Liz Heron

Feminist Review No. 23: Socialist-Feminism Out of the Blue
Feminist Review £4.95

WHY REVIEW a single issue of a quarterly journal that has been published without interruption since 1979? *Feminist Review*'s first appearance in the year that can now be seen to have closed the door on post-war political optimism has meant a long engagement with a set of historical circumstances very different from those that produced the women's liberation movement. Comparative certainties crumbled and what seemed solid foundations turned to shifting ground. The feminist generation gap, widened by the backward outlook of the Eighties, is a painful reminder of how quickly experience can overtake analysis; younger feminists are coming of age in a world of chronic unemployment and shrinking public services, quite unlike the one in which the generation of '68 grew up. This might suggest that a new range of feminisms, adapted for tougher times, has superseded Seventies socialist-feminism, which, as the collective behind this special issue acknowledges, 'is regarded by many as a dead political perspective'.

Such editorial candour makes this a welcome and important volume. Argumentative debate runs through it — in pieces on racism, socialist-feminism in the Labour Party, women in Armagh and the role of women in the miners' strike — but the two initial articles hold vital clues to some of the difficulties presently inherent in socialist-feminism's necessary relationship to a diversity of political goals.

In a round-table discussion on feminism and class politics, Michèle Barrett, Beatrix Campbell, Anne Phillips, Angela Weir and Elizabeth Wilson give what turns out to be a brave airing to the arguments and positions that divide as well as unite socialist-feminist theorists, all of them germane to perceptions of feminism within the tactics and strategies of the Labour and Communist parties. Between the opposing views about feminist alliance with, or dissociation from, traditional working-class movements, a number of other questions emerge: the concept of patriarchy, the possibility of integrating marxist and feminist theory, the argument that sections of the Left have used feminism and its critiques of the labour movement to justify moves to the right ever since feminists were stranded high, dry and vulnerable by the defeat of the Bennite Left in the Labour Party. All these arguments matter for the public recognition of a feminism that offers and asks for more than the limited versions some left-wing men seem so eager to espouse.

Of men, Elizabeth Wilson remarks that 'half of those on the left who think they are sensitive to feminism have taken up the pornography issue without being aware that it is one on which socialist-feminists disagree'. It's also arguable that some male leftists are less susceptible to analyses of women's social and economic position than to the rhetoric of guilt they sometimes encounter from feminists. The way they swallow it willingly, like bad boys taking their nasty medicine, suggests there's some left-wing demand for Thatcher-style disciplinarians, but in no way reassures that women won't still be marginalised in socialism's grand plan.

The issue of moralising as a substitute for political openness is at the heart of Susan Ardill and Sue O'Sullivan's account of attempted censorship and exclusion of lesbian sado-masochists at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. However alien such battles may appear to non-metropolitans and heterosexuals, their implications go far, pointing to a reductive politics where subjective emotional experience is given primacy in a scramble for victim-status. This static 'politics of identity' leads to a hierarchy of political righteousness rather than productive change.

Perhaps it's unsurprising that 'feminism' is often suspect among working-class women. In an interview about her experience as a treasurer of Women Against Pit Closures, Jean McCrindle tells Sheila Rowbotham that many miners' wives still fear and reject the feminist label even though the strike has led them to a significant rethinking of roles and domestic relationships. Conversely, Sarah Perrigo's description of how hard the going is for feminists in the Leeds Labour Party is an astringent antidote to the blandness with which feminism is sometimes touted as a selling point in the consumer-choice supermarket of populist social democracy.

Socialist-feminism may well be overlooked and frequently discounted within the Left itself, but it can be concluded from this timely volume that it is far from dead; it is very much alive to difference and the need for a politics of movement that admits new priorities. Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Margaret Coulson put a forceful argument in these pages for a transformation of socialist-feminism that will meet the challenge of racism. But, as Christina Loughran's painstaking chronicle of the tortuous splits in the Armagh women's movement makes clear, the legacy of imperialism permits no simple overhauls. Its own multiplicity is something else to be reckoned with. □

By the author of *A History of Women's Bodies*

EDWARD SHORTER

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SHORT STORIES

Outer edge

Sara Maitland

The Threshing Floor
BARBARA BURFORD *Sheba* £4.95
Man Descending
GUY VANDERHAEGHE *Bodley Head* £8.95
Ikons
GEORGE PAPAELLINAS *Penguin* £2.50
Incidents at the Shrine
BEN OKRI *Heinemann* £9.95
Little Tours of Hell
JOSEPHINE SAXTON *Pandora* £9.95 & £3.95

FRANK O'CONNOR, the Irish short story writer, had a theory that the best short stories, as distinct from novels, were written from culturally marginalised or oppressed communities coming into consciousness. This, he claimed, was why there were so many great Irish short story writers and why (at the time when he wrote his book on the subject, in the 1950s) there was such a powerful stream of Caribbean short stories.

This group of five collections could be held to prove his thesis — although both Vanderhaeghe (who is Canadian) and Saxton (who is published here in a feminist list) might not like the suggestion. The other three authors write firmly out of and about their own marginalisation and their own conscious claims to its cultural importance — and easily the best of the bunch is Burford's **The Threshing Floor**, which emerges from an identity informed both by Blackness and by feminism and which takes lesbianism as its community.

And they are stunning stories: magical realism firmly located in the political present and reverberating with both surprise and certainty. Burford offers us a wonderfully authoritative narrative voice which never whinges, seldom polemicises, just reveals richness and knowing and wisdom and power. I liked the six short pieces with which the book begins more than the novella which takes up considerably more than half of it and from which it takes its title: it was nearly a novel and wasn't quite. But why compare within excellence? The first story, 'Dreaming the Sky Down', in which an adolescent girl gains strength, knowledge and finally serene power through her dream ability to fly, stunned me with its brilliance and I was as putty in the writer's hands. Sheba have sold Burford short with their blurb, which says that she is 'undoubtedly the most impressive British Black woman writer to emerge in recent years' — the three last adjectives seem redundant and apologetic to me.

Not fair on the other four writers, since I read Burford first and they all make good reading. Vanderhaeghe turns in a thoroughly professional collection of short stories in a very typical Canadian style: they capture moments of real significance in personal growth and always give the physical sense of the largeness of the country and the smallness of the individual — often a child, or an adult trapped in childishness. The narratives of several of the dozen stories in **Man Descending** are triggered by the multi-ethnicity of Canada and are set in the past, when the facts were rawer. Even within the restrictions of space Vanderhaeghe is very good at the slightly old-fashioned business of 'the well rounded character' and this makes comfortable reading (you care enough about what happens to his people and it is never *too* dreadful) while the formal satisfactions reassure.

With both Papaellinas and Okri I had greater cultural problems of my own: Papaellinas' **Ikons** is about the experiences of being an Australian of Greek origin and tells them with a wealth of detail which is convincing and touching, but I had no grounding point against which to test his vision and the stories make no claims to universality or a broader meaning. Moreover I had little sense that these were short stories in the rich and inevitable way that great short stories are: all eight deal with a single family and feed off each other not just in terms of theme and image, but of information.

Okri is both a better and more ambitious writer: sentence by sentence he turns in beautiful, strong prose, dense with lyricism and metaphor, skipping elegantly along the edge of surrealism and never collapsing into it. The two stories set in London have a spare, disassociated atmosphere of violence about them which is impressive technically, as well as moving. The other six stories in **Incidents at the Shrine** are set in Nigeria and I found myself unable to know how to read them — this is not necessarily a criticism of Okri's writing but perhaps of my cultural insularity: it is not necessarily the business of a fiction writer to 'explain' anything to the ignorant — but I felt I did not know enough, before or after reading them, to understand the authorial stance or even the genre of these fictions. Reading Okri felt to me like talking to someone who has a secret —he made me want to find out what made him write so, but he was not telling. I found these stories compelling and baffling and, therefore, often alarming. The cover blurb permits me to find them also funny, which was a relief, because I sometimes did and then felt uneasy about whether I was meant to: altogether a strange and disturbing read raising questions beyond the simple ones of 'merit'.

Saxton, though, was mainly a delight, certainly a frolic on home ground for me. Both food and travel have become stock-in-trade images of feminist fiction writing — subjects heavily loaded with metaphorical meaning; symbols of almost anything and everything, lust, childhood, motherhood, autonomy, pleasure and loneliness; images summoning memories and slipping sideways into all too often sloppy lyricism. Saxton doesn't let us get away with it any more; in **Little Tours of Hell** it's back to sharply observed precision and unsentimental reality as she tells us all the worst about meals and holidays — physical (Greek loos and pretentious wine bar menus) and emotional (greed, manipulation, secret lusts, drowning tedium and loathing the people you love) — and does so with a gloomy vigour and a sly wit which are refreshing. There are too many things that I am never going to be able to read with self-indulgent pleasure again; Saxton will make you snigger and it is fun. Oddly enough, the perfect book for your own summer holiday. □

Sweet sorrow

Naomi Mitchison

Leaves of the Tulip Tree
JULIETTE HUXLEY *John Murray* £12.95

THIS IS the true story of a marriage between two very charming, very intelligent, but improbably different people, taking part in fascinating activities and friendships, always near disaster but somehow avoiding it. Julian Huxley saw Juliette as the wonderful gift which would build up the branching tree of his life; Juliette just wanted to be loved.

It started at Garsington, that magic place where Ottoline Morrell was queen and hostess to so many of the top arts crowd of the Twenties, who laughed at her behind her back or wrote cruelties. Juliette, the lovely innocent in the background, has set that right. I cannot quite forgive my parents for never letting me go there at Aldous's invitation. Both Huxleys were guests. Perhaps Aldous was gentler and less tearingly ambitious than his elder brother. But his eyes were on Maria, the other innocent.

Throughout his life Julian, caught by his Huxley and Arnold heredity, was desperate to achieve, to take on whatever excitements presented themselves, in science or in the semi-science of the zoo or UNESCO. He loved all life, was a marvellous bird-watcher and genuinely wanted to help humanity by promoting scientific knowledge. Julian was confident in his own ability but yet needed — like most of us — constant underpinning. Juliette did this devotedly and lovingly: 'He for God only, she for God in him.' But exchanges of marital devotion, not uncommon, should surely be mutual.

In this case, they were not. Julian always treated her, whether he knew it or not, as some kind of lesser intelligence. She wrote marvellous letters, some of which are quoted here, yet in conversation he jumped on her like a bad teacher. I remember those lovely, small sculptures of hers; he never gave her the warm word of praise which she would have loved. She was often an official hostess, especially in the UNESCO days; that is hard work. She did it splendidly and the list of guests and friends covers most of the men and women who are part of mid-century history. Perhaps the most loved, certainly the most difficult were D.H. Lawrence and Frieda.

In those days marriages were taken more seriously than they are now; the relationship was not meant to be broken. Julian became totally and embarrassingly enamoured of an American girl with other ideas. Even more tactless than their old friend H.G. Wells, he triumphed in his escape from the marriage

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bond. In fact it was nearly broken, but Juliette managed to pull him and herself through, as she did with other pains and difficulties. The time came when Julian's health broke down; he had worn himself out; but it was no gentle going.

Read this book and, if you will, compare it with Julian's own various memoirs — always, naturally, typed out by Juliette. Odd how a different lighting brings out strange patterns in what had seemed so clear and correct a landscape. □

Serial rites

Andrew Clements

Orientations
PIERRE BOULEZ *Faber £25*

'I HAVE NEVER really understood why it should be thought the first duty of a musician, and particularly a composer, to relegate his intelligence to a place among the dangerous, if not actually pernicious, accessories of his personality . . . If people call me an intellectual, I cannot take it as an insult, however offensively intended — very much the opposite!'

Boulez remains the most intellectually formidable of living composers. If his creative flow has sometimes faltered, sometimes seemed to be drying up altogether, his literary output has been maintained: trenchant, piercingly analytical, it has sought to propagate not only Boulez' thoughts on the compositional process itself, but also upon the historical context in which a composer finds himself in the second half of the 20th century. Collected here, in some 500 pages, is perhaps the most comprehensive and provocative statement of an aesthetic position mustered by a musician since Schoenberg. Boulez lacks Schoenberg's pedagogical flair: he would not dream of going back to first principles to explain a theory, but plunges immediately into the densest exegesis; never before has one needed to remember more vividly that his early training was in mathematics, for in several essays, Boulez resorts to mathematical concepts and notations to convey his thoughts with absolute precision.

The bulk of *Orientations* covers the period from 1961 to 1980, though a number of earlier pieces not published in the previous collection, *Notes of an Apprenticeship,* appear as well. Thus much of the book deals not specifically with Boulez' own music, for from the early 1960s he began to encounter the technical blocks and linguistic *culs de sac* which were only dispersed with his IRCAM researches in the last five years, but with his experience of the composers he began then to conduct.

No conductor surely has ever had such fixed and staunchly defended views on the repertory he will or will not support as Boulez. The pieces here, especially on 20th-century composers, show the fixity of his opinion: the Second Viennese School is in, but only the earlier Schoenberg, while Berg was added to the pantheon relatively late: 'I have learned to discover the labyrinths of Berg's music after surmounting the emotional obstacle that separates us.' Debussy, particularly the late pieces such as *Jeux*, continues to fascinate him; Stravinsky qualifies because of his rhythmic experiments, but only up to the time of the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*; for neoclassicism Boulez has absolutely no time at all. Messiaen is treated with a mixture of respect for a former mentor and scarcely disguised distaste for what Boulez perceives as the vulgarity of some of his music. Perhaps only Webern receives unqualified approval, and his discussions of the later works in particular exude an enthusiasm that Boulez is very careful to exclude from his writings about less worthy figures.

It is this section of the book which will appeal most to non-specialist readers. The essays and articles were nearly all intended for a wide audience; they first appeared as record-sleeve notes or, in the case of the Wagner essays, the programme books for the productions he conducted at Bayreuth, but there is no lessening in their density of thought, nor the intensity of their insights. There is a fascinating comparison of *Pierrot Lunaire* with his own *Le marteau sans maître*, in which a problem that has clearly vexed Boulez throughout his conducting career surfaces for the first time: how to deal with *Sprechgesang*, the half-way house between speech and song that Schoenberg invented and which Berg was to employ in both his operas. Boulez, uncharacteristically, cannot decide how to cope with it, but it has continued to trouble him.

For those seeking to find a key to Boulez' own music, *Orientations* is less helpful. As Jean-Jacques Nattiez' fascinating introduction to the book points out, when Boulez began to run into trouble with his composition and more and more 'works-in-progess' were added to his catalogue, he preferred to introduce new pieces in the form of interviews, especially with Celestin Deliège, and some of those have already appeared in book form. Undoubtedly the lack of certainty about his methods has fostered a reticence in writing about them: one only need compare the circumspection of his thoughts on, say, *Rituel* with the marvellously resonant introduction to his Third Piano Sonata and its relation to Mallarmé in the famous '*Sonate, que me veux-tu?*' to realise how around 1960 Boulez began to lose his way.

The signs are that in *Répons*, the piece using all the computer hardware and expertise IRCAM can presently muster, he might have gained a direction again. The IRCAM experience is excluded from this collection, because, as Nattiez observes, 'that would have involved making premature judgements about a venture that is not yet complete'. In the meantime, though, there is more than enough meat here to stimulate thoughts and revelations for a good while yet. The collection has been assembled with scrupulous care and most lucidly translated by the late Martin Cooper. While it may not be quite the same as having a few of those incomplete Boulez scores definitively finished, it is more than a worthwhile substitute. □

Wheels of fortune

Huw Richards

'I GET UP, eat, ride, have a shower and massage, sleep, eat again then go back to bed.' Paul Kimmage's daily routine will not appeal to most *NS* readers, but it makes him one of the most envied sportsmen in France.

Pro cyclists command, in France, the sort of reverence accorded to baseball players in the USA and, this year, the 24-year-old Irishman is one of the elite 210 contesting the Tour de France, an awesome 4,000-kilometre pilgrimage demanding physical efforts which have been compared to running a marathon every day for three weeks. Each July the Tour commands the undivided attention accorded General Elections and World Cups. Wherever the race is becomes for that period the focal point of France.

So, as it arrived in Cherbourg earlier this month, for the first time in 57 years, the local mood was neatly summarised by *La Presse de la Manche*'s headline on its 20-page special supplement: 'Hip, hip, hip, Hourra!' Roads closed, buses were re-routed, businesses shut for the afternoon and thousands set off for the day's finishing point in the suburb of Equerdreville.

They wait patiently for the arrival of the riders, a captive audience along the family lines dreamed of so fervently and fruitlessly by British football administrators. All of French life seems to be here. Coca-Cola jostles incongrously with the Communist Party's *Humanité Dimanche*; Catch insecticides provide graphic testimony with a vast plastic fly, legs to the sky; Pelforth beer encourages the roaring trade of the roadside stalls with massive brown bottles.

A fast-talking loudspeaker man keeps the fans in touch with developments out on the road and the appearance of French TV's helicopter provides an effective early warning system. The first cyclists appear half an hour ahead of schedule and, to a great roar, Italian Guido Bontempi charges clear of three other riders to claim his stage win, a cash prize, his photo in tomorrow's papers and one of the vast bouquets of flowers invariably pressed on Tour prize-winners. The rest of the field — now down to 191 — ambles home in relaxed fashion within a minute, secure in the knowledge that everyone who comes in with a bunch receives the time of the first of the group. If they didn't, the carnage on the narrow roads as riders competed for space would be horrendous.

Conventionally regarded, the Tour de France lacks something as spectator sport. The assembled thousands saw an exciting finish followed by an unhurried main group, all over in less than two minutes. But the Tour is, after all, a media event, started as part of a circulation battle by a cycle magazine in 1903. (Now called *L'Equipe*, the magazine organises the race to this day). The founders foresaw that the almost superhuman exploits involved in the Tour would provide endless copy and become the source of infinite legend and, if you

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really want to see what is going on, your place is not by the roadside but in front of the television, where Antenne 2's daring motorcycle cameramen provide brilliantly vivid footage.

But, for the millions who do come to watch, there is still the thrill, however brief, of having such legendary heroes as the Breton Bernard Hinault — known as the 'Badger' but looking more like a panda, with two black eyes from a crash — or his blond, bespectacled, Parisian rival, Laurent Fignon, riding down their street. These are stars of a hierarchical system based on the ten-man teams. Elementary aerodynamics mean that two cyclists travel faster than one, four faster than two — making the development of teams inevitable. Bottom of the social scale in the teams are the *Domestiques*, who act as servants for more senior riders. Paul Kimmage has to fetch water bottles, provide protection from the winds and, *in extremis*, give up his bike to his seniors.

Robert Millar, a thin Scot — with a build reminiscent of generations of Scottish wingers, an engagingly oddball Glaswego-French accent — is at the other end of the scale. He's been through the amateur jungle and acted as a *Domestique* but his ability to propel a bike rapidly up Alpine roads that normal human beings would be reluctant to tackle in anything less powerful than a Land Rover, plus the fierce determination that characterises all top riders, has taken him to the top. 'Everybody works in the team but me,' he says with a smile, knowing that his Tour really only begins when the race heads into the mountains. Then he is expected to deliver the spectacular climbs that have made his name — and won him a lucrative contract as team leader for Panasonic.

If he wins this year, and a mountainous course means he'll never have a better chance, he'll comfortably eclipse the late Tommy Simpson (who died on the 1967 Tour) or Norman Tebbit's dad as the most famous British cyclist. Currently he's in the odd position of a sportsman far better known on the Continent than in his native country — breakfast cereal ads can only do so much to make a minority sportsman's name.

Even if he doesn't win, the odds are that the person who does will, for the first time ever, be a native English-speaker — maybe Ireland's Stephen Roche, or American Greg Lemond. Only Hinault seems to stand in the way of an event as unthinkable, five years ago, as a Dane opening the bowling for Derbyshire, a German Wimbledon champion or the USA losing the Americas Cup. □

Weekend competition

No 2934 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Following the acclaim for Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*, we'd like sonnet versions of famous 20th-century novels (i.e. the whole novel in one sonnet). Deadline 7 August.

No 2931 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Aesop's Fables for Thatcherite Britain.

Report **By Red Dorn**

It's said that La Fontaine's Fables supply delight to three ages: to the child, the freshness of the story; to the student of literature, the consummate art with which it's told; to the 'man' of the world, the subtle reflections on character and life which it conveys. The same goes for Aesop. The same certainly doesn't go for your entries. There are quite enough simplistic accounts of Thatcherism without adding wicked wolves and dear little piggies. And — maybe it's the heat — your characteristic ribaldry got rather out of hand. Ten pounds each to the best of a bad bunch.

A duck, arriving at a water-hole to drink, found a rhinoceros in possession. 'Good evening,' said the rhino. 'This is a fine drinking place. Cash in advance, though, of course.'

'What do you mean?' asked the duck. 'Animals have always drunk here free.'

'Sorry,' answered the rhino. 'It's been privatised. No handouts for lame ducks.'

'But I'm not lame,' protested the duck, whereupon the rhino stamped on its foot, saying 'You are now.'

The helplessly writhing duck croaked, 'I can't believe this. I only came here to relieve my thirst.'

'Never mind,' said the rhino. 'Have one on me,' and pissed all over the duck.

Moral: Things can always get worse.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

A young rat became an expert swimmer and was able to cross the duckpond faster than anyone else. The chief hen was so impressed by this that she allowed him to organise the collection of rubbish in the farmyard and he became immensely wealthy.

Moral: More speed, less waste.

JOHN STANLEY

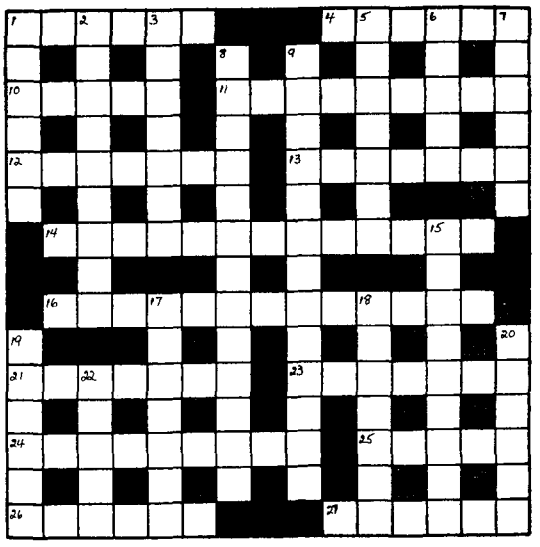
In a dry season, a hamster wanted for good herbage to eat in the parched ground. Seeing a giraffe cropping the topmost leaves of the trees, which were yet moist, the hamster begged him to let a leaf fall so that he could share in the giraffe's good fortune. 'Why,' said the giraffe, 'if I were to do that, you would have no incentive to grow a long neck like me. I cannot act against your long-term interest.' 'Wait,' said the hamster. 'If I do not eat, I will have no long-term interest.' 'In that case,' said the giraffe, 'you have evidently been naturally de-selected,' and went on cropping, taking care not to let a morsel drop.

Moral: Charity begins at home, and stays there.

NOEL PETTY

Weekend Crossword 1526

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1526, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 12 August.



ACROSS

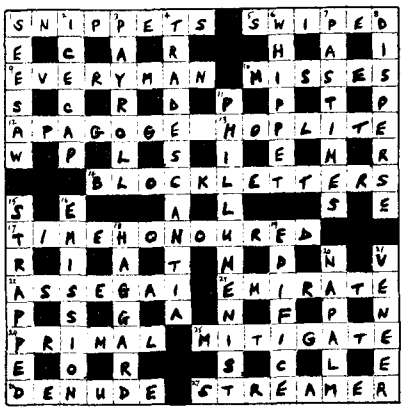
1. A plant may have one to compete with me (6)
4. Moderate fit of rage (6)
10. What a bird does for soldiers kept in an enclosure (5)
11. We get strangely sour with fairies (9)
12. Stroke permitted in some verse (7)
13. Cheese equipped for walking? (7)
14. The one who finishes off an aristocrat behind the trees is new to crime (5,8)
16. Substitute thwarted and cheated (13)
21. Swears in maintaining they are the fattest sheep in the market (7)
23. Modern woman embraced by unfriendly animal (7)
24. China in place or out of order (9)
25. Swiftly becoming relative if one is missing (5)
26. Outcome of disorder in Ulster (6)
27. Possesses round coinage showing animals (6)

DOWN

1. Seal up again putting the letter in its holder (6)
2. Mozart's spirit in love (9)
3. Mutilates a point of view in writing (7)
5. Article in it seen translated for periodical (7)
6. Centre-half gets four in the cup (5)
7. Rebellion in naval outfit is wrong (6)
8. Team in unorthodox action left in dispute (13)
9. Something worthless for players with a distant object (5,8)
15. Complaint given the O.K. in the Orient Express? (9)
17. Biographer who makes the smell increase (7)
18. Count on a girl being abstract (7)
19. A politician found in a women's present (6)
20. People smoke in school (6)
22. School fees? (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1524



Prizewinner to 1524

Mr. L. Toole (Bexhill, E. Sussex)

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AGENDA

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SOB STORY
DENIS GOODMAN
NOW BERYL, I KNEW YOU'D BE UPSET IF YOU WENT TO THAT PARTY, IT'S ONLY TO BE EXPECTED.. YOU NEED MORE TIME
SOB
SNIFF
SNIFF
WAIL
IT'S ALL OK, TAKING ON THE ROLE OF THE CONSIDERATE INJURED PARTY, SMILING GRACIOUSLY AT THE HAPPY COUPLE, BEHAVING WITH DIGNITY AND REASSURING THEM THAT ALL IS WELL
BUT WHAT'S REALLY TERRIBLE IS WHEN THEY BELIEVE YOU

CHESS

THERE USED to be a puzzle of spot-the-odd-man-out amongst the following: Spassky, Korchnoi, Dzhindzhihashvili, Alburt, Gulko, Shamkovich, Sosonko, Liberzon, Ivanov, Gutman. The answer was Boris Gulko, because he wasn't out (of the USSR). Now at last, after seven years of trying to get out, Gulko and his wife Anna Ashamurova, also a grandmaster, have joined the great chess brain-drain. On 1 June Boris and Anna, with their son David, finally reached a reception centre in Israel for Soviet emigrés.

The puzzle that remains is why did the Soviet authorities, having resisted their pleas for so long, relent in the end? A decade ago Gulko was the Soviet champion and well on the way to establishing himself as one of the world's leading players. Had he been prepared to go on his own he could have taken the easy way out, which is to keep very quiet about one's intentions and then defect during a tournament abroad. Unfortunately, the exodus of cunning and talented escapeniks only serves to make the Soviet bureaucracy more vindictive in their treatment of those who have applied for exit visas. Neither the Gulkos' 1982 hunger strike nor expressions of support from the international chess community had any effect other than the imposition of tighter restrictions on their movements. The timing of their release strongly suggests that the decision to grant their request was motivated by a desire to avoid adverse publicity during the London phase of the Kasparov-Karpov match.

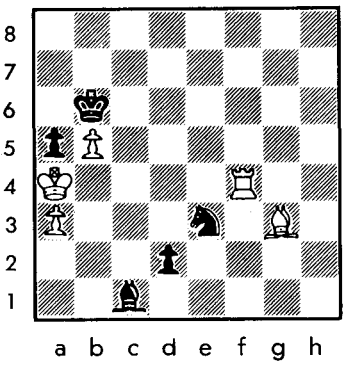
Now Gulko, who will soon be 40, has to start rebuilding his chess career. He has been barred from competition during the years that would normally be regarded as a chess master's prime, but there has been a tendency for Soviet emigrés to achieve an upward surge in playing strength. Here is an example of how well he could play before his troubles began. His opponent in this game became the 1986 Soviet champion.

Gulko-Tseshkovsky, USSR Ch. 1977. Sicilian Defence.
1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. c3 Nf6 4. Bd3 White's handling of the opponent should be noted by those who do not relish Sicilian main lines. In effect White adopts a Ruy Lopez formation. **g6 5. Bc2 Bg7 6. d4 cxd4 7. cxd4 0-0 8. 0-0 Bg4 9. Nbd2 Nc6 10. h3 Bxf3 11. Nxf3 Rc8 12. Be3 Nd7 13. Qe2 Nb6 14. Rad1 Qd7** Black's position is uninspiring but appears solid enough. Gulko decides that the way to make progress is to exchange dark-squared bishops. **15. d5! Nb4 16. Bb3 Na4 17. Bd4 Nc5 18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. Bc4 Nba6 20. e5!** Stronger than winning a pawn with 20. b4 Na4 21. Bxa6 bxa6 22. Qxa6. **Qc7 21. Rd4 dxe5 22. Nxe5 Qd6 23. Re1 Nb8 24. Qe3** Pin-pointing the dark-square weaknesses with threats of Ng4 and Rh4. **h5 25. Be2 Rh8** A miserable job for a rook, but otherwise White rips open the K-side with 26. Bxh5. **26. Bf3 b5 27. Nc6 Nxc6 28. dxc6 Qf6 29. Rf4 Qd6 30. Qc3 + f6 31. Rd4 1-0.** The Nc5 is lost.

With the world title match starting next Monday the time has come for pundits like me to venture predictions on a contest that is really too close to call. So here goes. I think Karpov will take a lead of 2 wins to 1 in the London half of the match and will hold out against a storming counter-attack by Kasparov in Leningrad. The two Ks are fighting only for the glory, having agreed to donate their prize money to the Chernobyl Relief Fund.

Problem

White to play and draw.



Solution

1. Rd4 Nf3! 2. Bf4! Nxd4 3. Bxd2 Nb3! 4. Bb4! axb4 5. axb4 and any move by the Black knight leaves White in stalemate. An elegant study by Nadareishvili.

George Botterill

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☐ A contest to find the most talkative budgerigar in the country is being organised as part of the National Exhibition of Cage and Aviary Birds at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre this year. Bad language is banned and any bird which swears will be thrown out of the event. — *Daily Telegraph* (David Bays)

☐ The mention of food must have brought the Duchess's thoughts round to me. We had been talking for several hours in her warm flat and my throat was very dry. 'Would you like a drink? I can pour you a sherry. I'm terribly sorry, but I cannot offer you tea. My maid is out today, and, to be honest, I don't know how to make it.' — *Mail on Sunday* (George Moor)

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